CORPSE PRINCESS

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

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CORPSE PRINCESS

VARCOLACI (NOUN)

An overarching term for a type of evil spirit and/or monster described in Romanian folklore. They are most often described as small dogs, dragons, beasts with multiple mouths, or pale humans. Varcolaci are said to devour the sky and cause eclipses. People who aren't baptized, people who commit unclean acts condemned by God, and babies born to unwed mothers can all become varcolaci.

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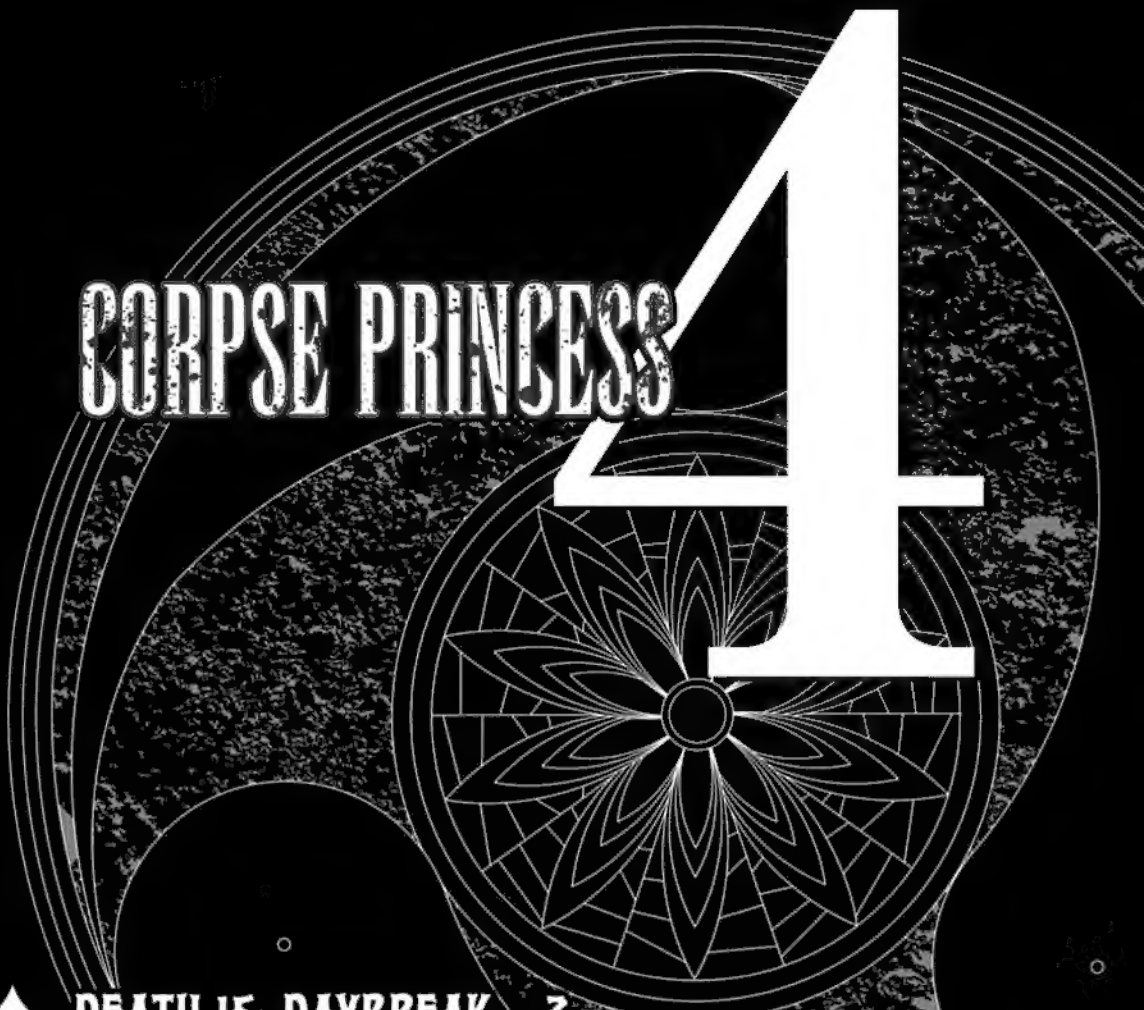

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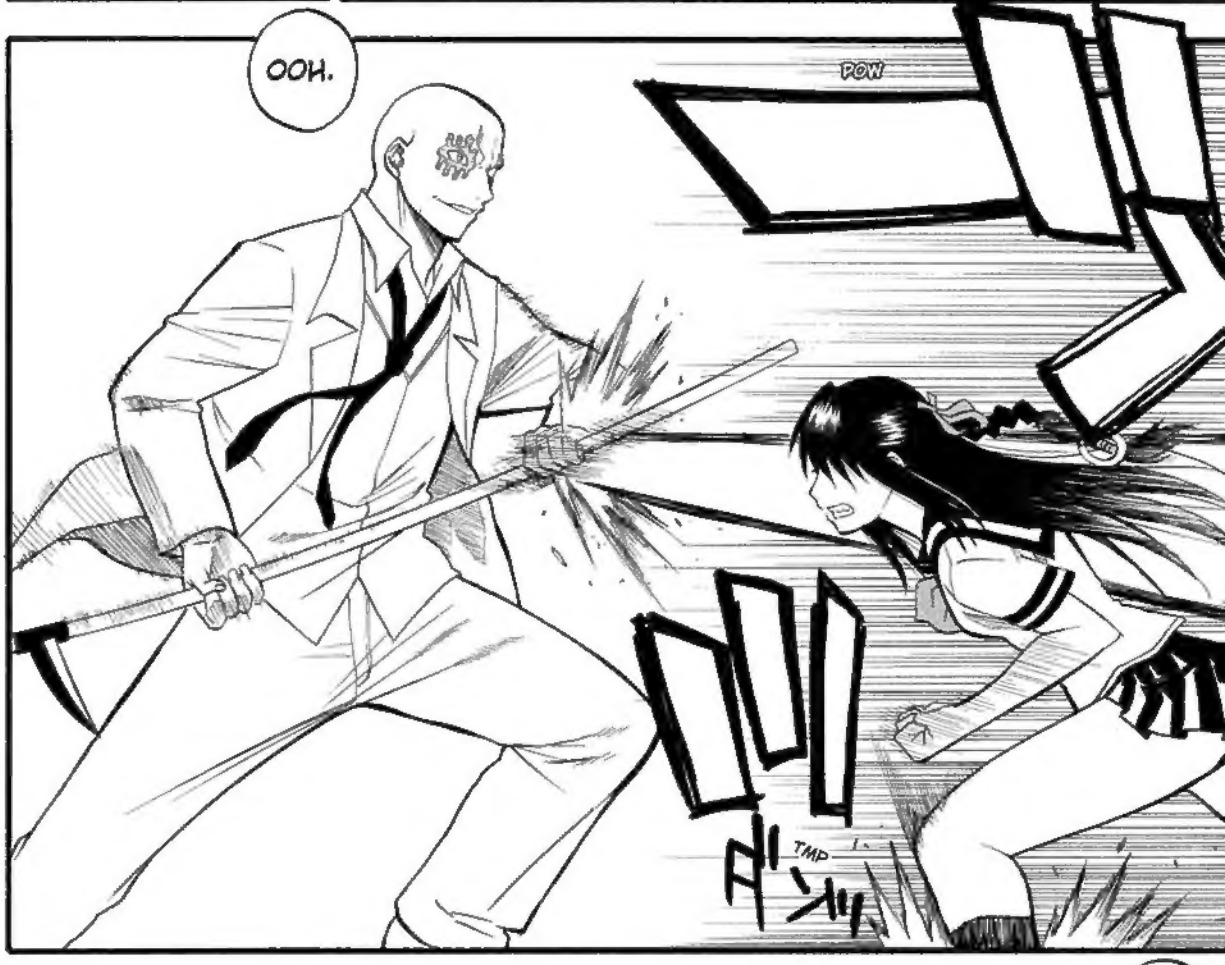
I'LL DE-STROY...
...YOU ALL...!
STEP
DEATH 15: DAYBREAK
EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU.

OHH ?
WHAT'S THAT, GIRLIE .....?
YOU GETTING COCKY .....?
GUESS I GOTTA HURT YOU A LITTLE MORE BEFORE YOU GET IT.
OKAY ?
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE


OOH.
POW
TMP

HUH?
AH?

CRACK
...!
KAH!?
BLUB
AHH...
VANISH.
BEGONE FROM MY SIGHT.
CRUNCH
WHAM
BEGONE FROM MY MEMORY.

CRASH
SMASH
SMASH
BAM
SHATTER
GAHAA
.....
GAH!
.....
BE-
GONE
...
STAND
...FROM
THIS
WORLD.

SHE'S NOTHING LIKE SHE WAS WHEN SHE FOUGHT THAT SEVEN STARS MEMBER.....! WHAT ON EARTH .....?
SHIMEN-SAN IS AN AUTONOMOUS SPIRIT THAT CAN POSSESS FLESH...IS IT BECAUSE HE DOESN'T HAVE A CASKET THAT SHE'S ABLE TO OVERWHELM HIM LIKE THIS .....?
CRAWL
NO... WAY... IT CAN'T BE .....
HOW COULD THIS BRAT ..... BEAT ME .....?
..... COULD IT BE.....?
.....
I'VE NO CHOICE .....
.....
GIMME FLESH! DO IT QUICK !!
AKA-SHA !!
STRAIN
Y-
YOU IDIOT!! AKA-SHA!! FLESH !!
RUSH

FWOOM
CURL
MELD
MELD
MELD
MELD
MELD
GI-HA-HA-HA. I'VE WON!! THIS MEAT IS MINE TO POS-SESS!!
THIS IS WHY I TEAMED UP WITH THAT GUY! HE CAN PUSH MY POWER TO THE LIMIT!!
WHA-?
WHAT... IS THAT .....?
THROB
TWITCH
OW!!
WHOOSH
..... YEAH?
WHAT .....
..... THE?

CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
GYA HA HERE!..
FWOOM
GYE!!!

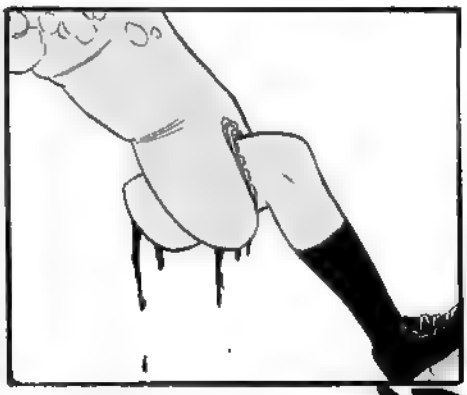
WHOOSH
FWOOM
...!
TCH !!
YOU LITTLE KICK-HAPPY BRAT .....
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
FWOOM
TAKE THIS !!
!!
RIP

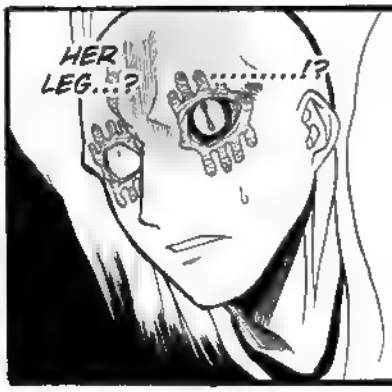
SKID
SKID
SKID
THUD
!!
... GE-HAH !!
LET'S SEE YOU DART AROUND NOW!!
.....
KACHAK
SLAM
YAHHH!!

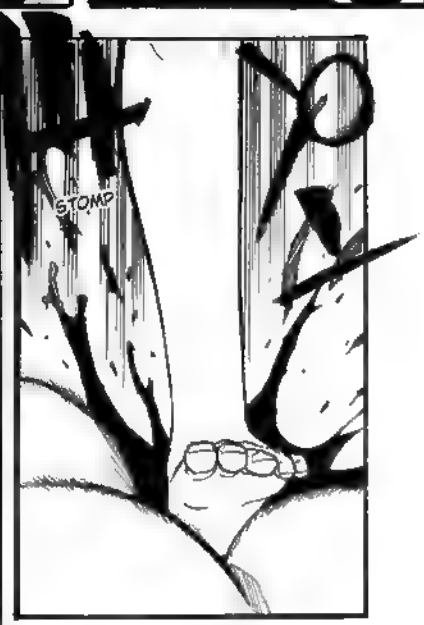
!!
CRUNCH
GIHAH! YOU'RE CHOW !!
WHAT A RUSH— THE CRUNCH OF YOUR ORGANS IN MY MOUTH!
GET READY TO BE DIGESTED, BRAT .....
FLICK
!
SQUEEZE

LOOM
LOOM
LOOM
SLICK
LOOM
SHUDDER
BURST

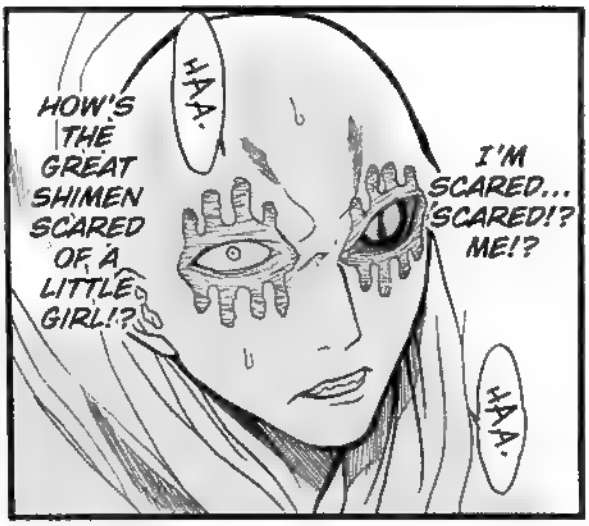
NO WAY!!? THE LEG I RIPPED OFF'S STILL RIGHT THERE.....!




HER LEG...!?


STOMP

AHHH!!
NO WAY?!
UU... OHH.


HAA.
HOW'S THE GREAT SHIMEN SCARED OF A LITTLE GIRL!?
I'M SCARED... SCARED!? ME!?
HAA.

SLICE

FWIP

FWOOM

RIP
RIP
RIP
RIP
FSSHH
GAPE
!!

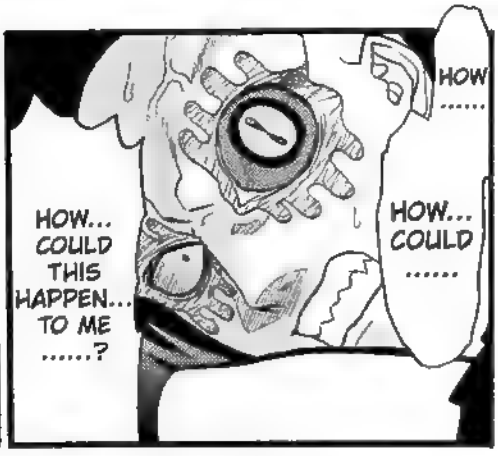
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
THUMP
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
OHHHHHH.
UHH
...
OHH
...

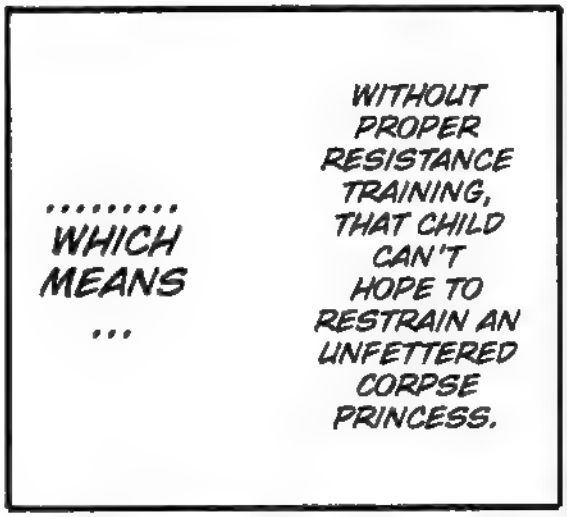
...MASSACRE.
IT'S A TOTAL...
TEARING THAT FLESH INTO SMALLER AND SMALLER PIECES.
...KEPT KILLING HIM.
AND SHE JUST ...
THE GROANS OF HER RESENTMENT ECHOED OUT INTO THE MOUNTAINS.

WHAT'S ... THIS .....?
BLOOD AND... PUS .....?
!
...?
DRIP
IS IT... MINE ...?
FLOW
FLOW
FLOW
FLOW
FLOW
FLOW
TREMBLE
CRAP..... MY BODY..... IT'S COLD..... MY WOUNDS... GETTING WORSE .....
..... GONNA FAINT .....
WOBBLE
THUD

SQUELCH
SQUELCH

THAT IMPOSSIBLY FAST REGENERATION AND BRUTE STRENGTH..... THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE ANSWER.....
THIS OVERWHELMING POWER OF HERS.....


HOW.....
HOW... COULD.....
HOW... COULD THIS HAPPEN... TO ME.....?


.....
WHICH MEANS...
WITHOUT PROPER RESISTANCE TRAINING, THAT CHILD CAN'T HOPE TO RESTRAIN AN UNFETTERED CORPSE PRINCESS.

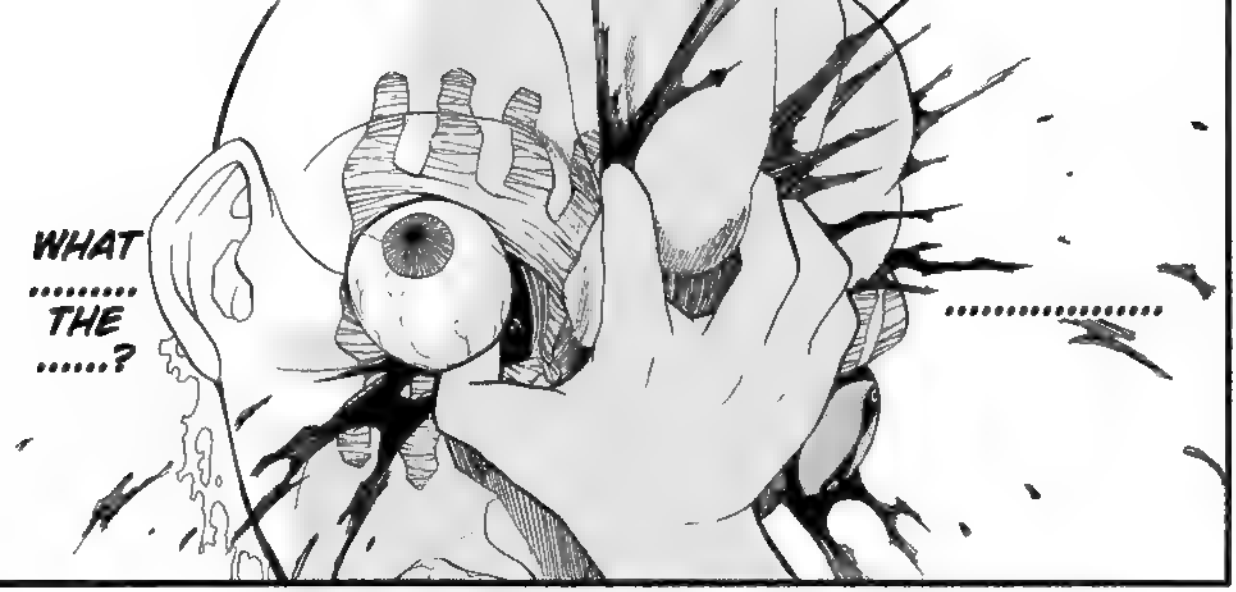
HOWEVER..... YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS IS CHANNELING HER CONTRACT HOLDER'S VERY LIFE INTO POWER.

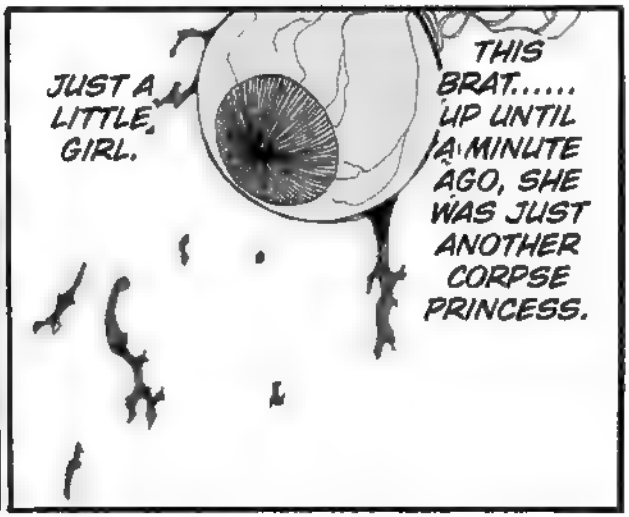
.....AS I THOUGHT.
BROTHER..... OF COURSE THAT WAS THE ONLY CHOICE YOU HAD, I KNOW.....

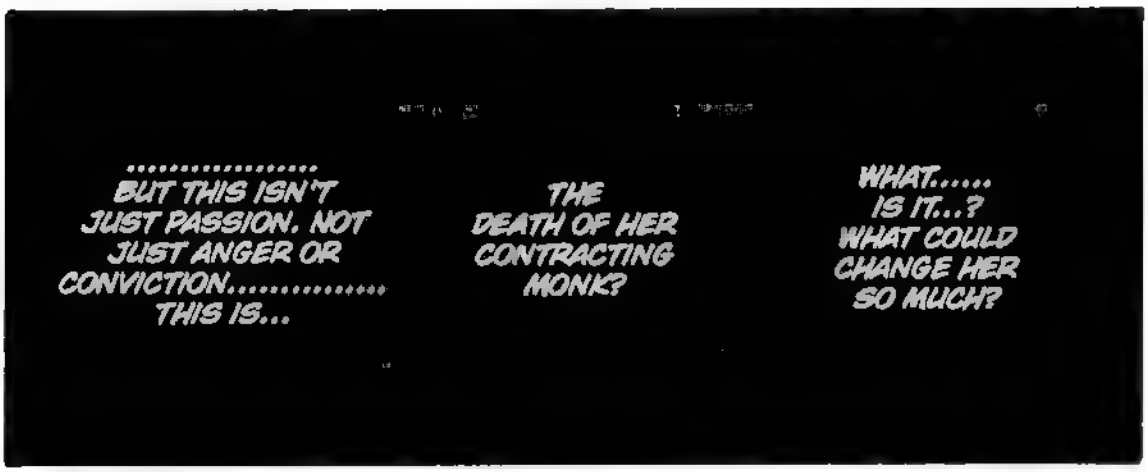
HE WILL DIE.

BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
GRAB
.....
!!
D-
DON'T
DO IT.
RIP
YOU
BRAT.
CRACK
A BRAT
LIKE YOU
ISN'T
S'POSED
TO KILL
ME!!
I'VE
KILLED
OVER
ONE
HUNDRED
PEOPLE
!!
CRACK
I
AM...
SHI-
MEN
!!
A
FLESH-
BEARING
VENGE-
FUL
GHOST
!!
CRACK

WRAP
!
GI-HAH !!
GI-HA-HA! YES!! NOW I CAN .....
!!
CRACK
TIGHTEN
SQUEEZE
RIP
NO REACTION AT ALL !?
HOLD ON...! HEY—
Y—
YOU!! HEY ...
I GOT YOU ALL TIED UP ...






.....
BUT THIS ISN'T JUST PASSION. NOT JUST ANGER OR CONVICTION..... THIS IS...
THE DEATH OF HER CONTRACTING MONK?
WHAT..... IS IT...? WHAT COULD CHANGE HER SO MUCH?

IT'S LIKE SHE GAINED A CURSE IN ORDER TO KILL ME.

...A CURSE.

WHSH
GRUNCH

STAND

YES. THERE'S A HEAVY PRICE TO PAY .....
WHAT FRIGHTENING POWER..... BUT IN EXCHANGE...
SHIMEN WAS BEATEN SO EASILY.
SHE DEFEATED HIM.....
.....
BUT TO DIE SO EASILY..... HE COULD NOT REALLY HAVE BEEN SO INDISPENSABLE TO EITHER OF US, I SUPPOSE .....
.....HE'S DYING..... YES.
I SUPPOSE .....
3 OM
UNFURL
...I'M A HOPELESS FOOL.
IT SEEMS..... ONCE AGAIN...
.....

FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
ZOOM
DROP
DROP
DROP
GAPE
EMERGE
PIERCE
BADUM

HOW FOOLISH.
TO SAVE AN ENEMY..... AN ENEMY THAT, IF LET BE, WOULD WILT AWAY...
CURSE MY SENTIMENTALITY.
.....
STEP
BUT.....
PERHAPS IT'S LEFTOVER SENTIMENT FOR HIM.....
...THIS IS THE LAST TIME.
SWOSH
AHH
...
AH.
.....
AHH.
...

AHHHH.
AAAAAHHHHH.
TWITCH
AHH...
AHHH...
FSSHH
FSSHH
AHHH.....
AH.

12
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11

WHOOOO

WONDER-FUL.....
KAW.
KAW-KAW-KAW. KA-HA-HA-HA-HA.

IM-PRES-SIVE .....
TO GIVE ME SUCH A SOUND THRASHING .....
BAM

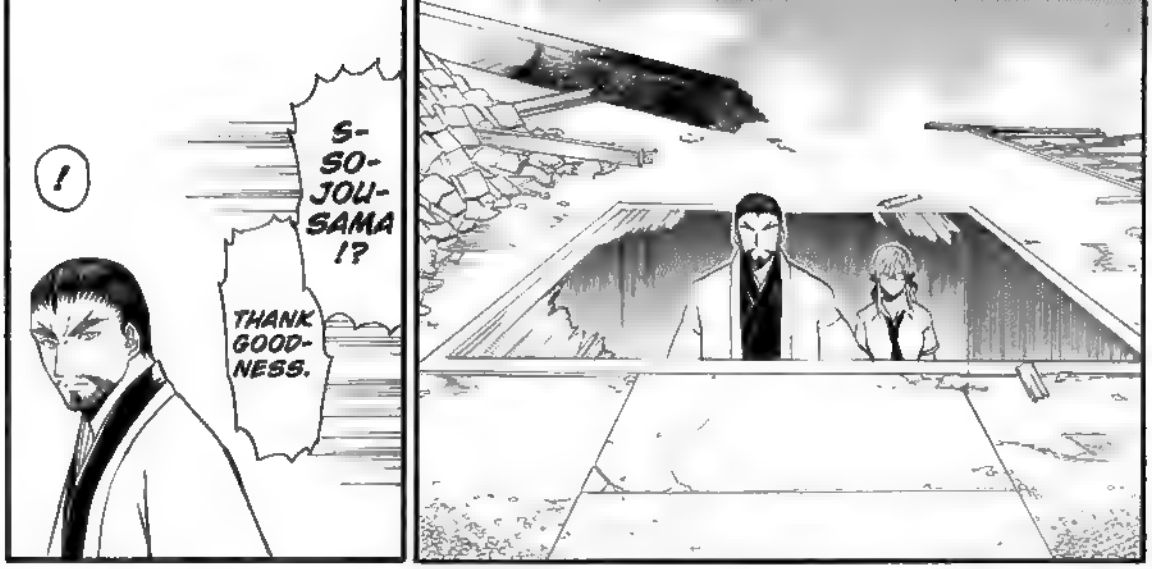
YES.
WELL DONE..... KAMIKA.

.....
I'M ALL DONE HERE, TAKA-MINE-SAMA.

WITH ITS MASTER DESTROYED, THIS LOCALE WILL SOON VANISH.

FADE
FADE
FADE
FADE
FADE

FLUTTER
...
OUR WIN .....
...THIS IS...
IN THE END .....
I'VE KEPT YOUR STRONGEST TRUMP CARD OCCUPIED FOR TWO DAYS..... IT IS DONE...
I MAY BE BEATEN..... BUT MY MISSION WAS FULFILLED.
SLIP
KAW.
KAW KAW KAW.


!
S-SO-JOU-SAMA!?
THANK GOOD-NESS.

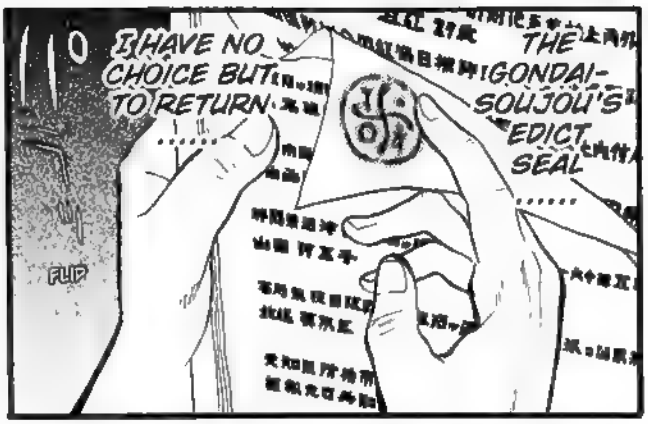
PANIC
A RETURN ORDER HAS BEEN ISSUED!
PANIC
Y-YES.
PANIC
YES, SORRY TO WORRY YOU.
WHAT IS IT? DID SOME-THING HAPPEN ?

.....
AN AT-TACK ?
RUB
THE TRUTH IS...
THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S KING IS HERE IN SHIKOKU .....
RE-TURN? RIDICU-LOUS.

.....
SHOW ME.
THE LIST OF MARTYRS IS ALREADY IN.....
Y-YES.
STARTING YESTERDAY, THROUGH THIS MORNING, EACH DISTRICT SAW ATTACKS ON ITS PROTECTOR ...

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE HEAD TEMPLE IS CURRENTLY WITHOUT A SOUJOU TO LEAD..... THAT, COMBINED WITH THIS NUMBER OF CASUALTIES AND ENSUING CHAOS, MEANS WE'RE HARDLY EQUIPPED TO HANDLE THE SITUATION.....
A TRAP, THEN..... THEY LURED US HERE TO BUY THE TIME THEY NEEDED .....

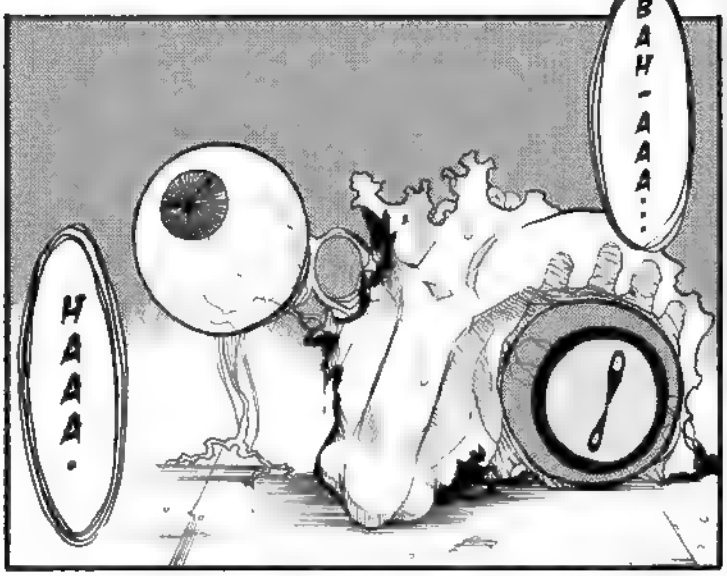
!!

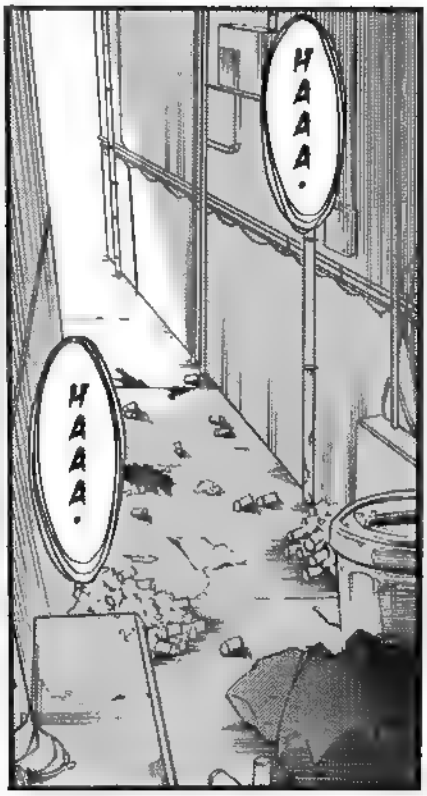

I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RETURN..... THE GONDAI-SOUJOU'S EDICT SEAL ..... FLIP

一条 亮
AKIRA NIJOU
田神 景世 少僧
IKU CITY/YANATSU CITY; PROTECTOR KEISEI TAGAMI, SHOU-SOUJOU
大場 健
DAIKOKUHAMA/ RYOKUOUKAIGAN PROTECTOR KEN OOBA, SHOU-SOUJOU

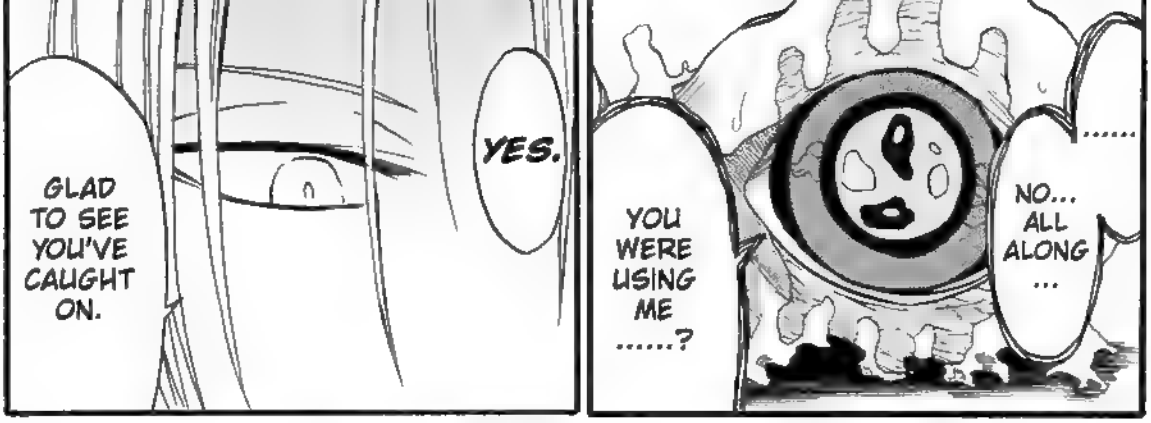
..... TAKA-MINE-SAMA?

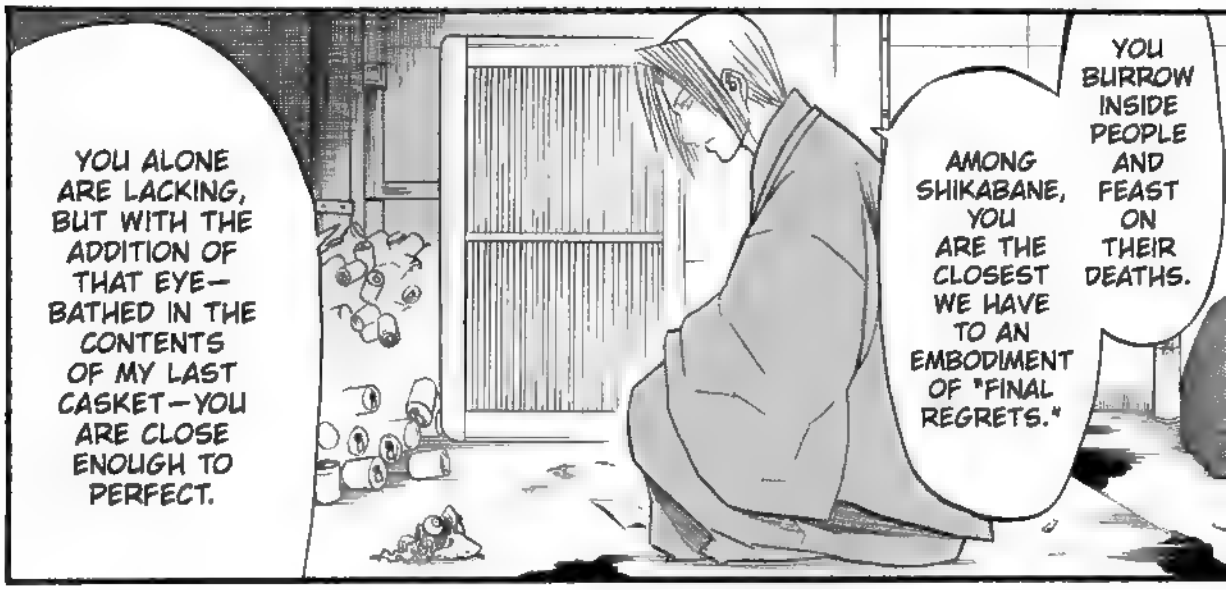
CRAWL
HAA.
CRAWL

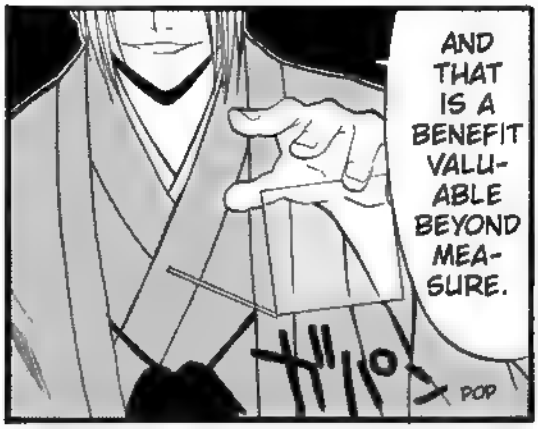

BAH-AAA...
HAAA.

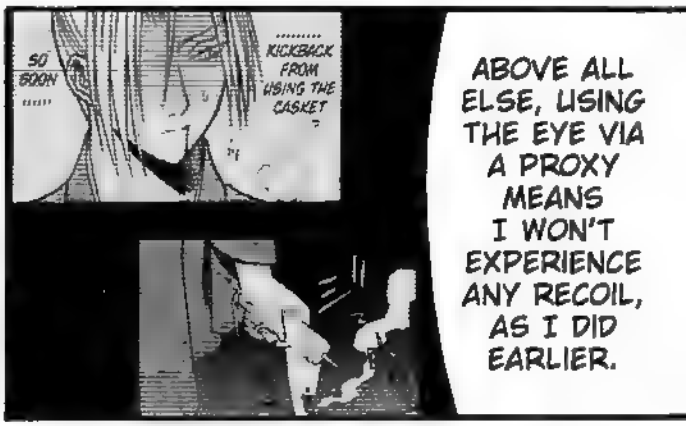

HAAA.
HAAA.

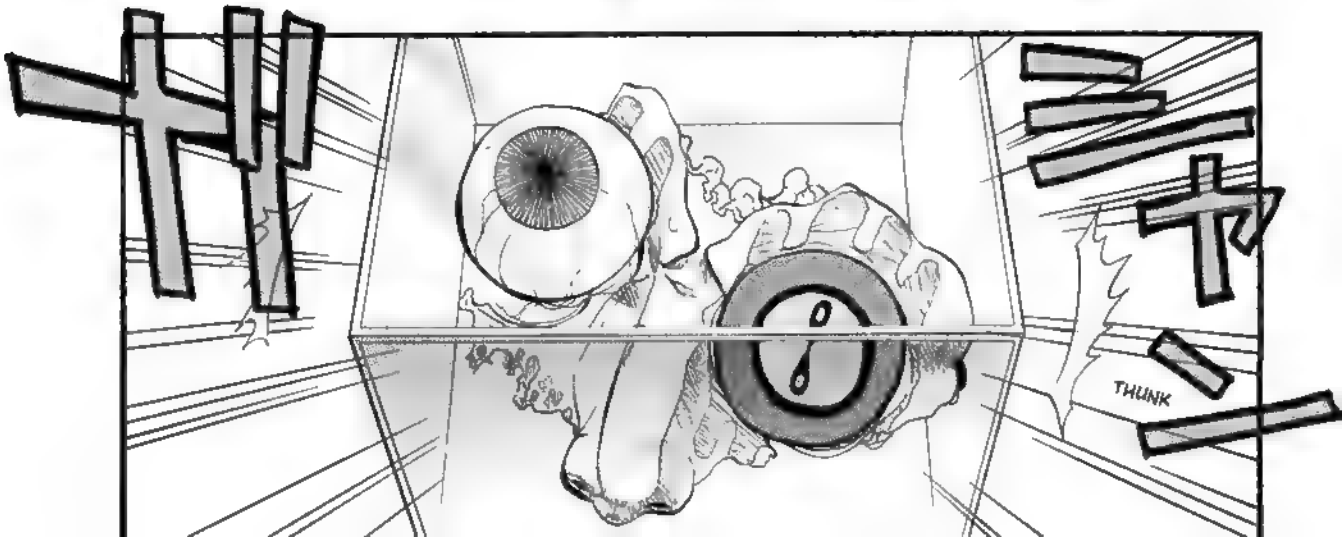
A-AKASHA, YOU .....
WHERE THE HELL'VE YOU BEEN .....?
W-WELL ...
WHAT-EVER. IT'S FINE.
QUICK... SAVE ME WITH BIZARRE LOTUS .....!!
..... YES.
FWIP
INDEED, I WILL SAVE YOU.
IN RETURN, YOU WILL FORGET EVERYTHING .....
...!?
WHAT ... THE?
YOU..... WHAT'RE YOU PLAN-NING?
I TOLD YOU FROM THE START, DID I NOT ?
THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THIS ATTACK WAS TO REPLENISH MY LOST CASKET .....
SO I'M GOING TO MAKE IT.
NOW. WITH YOU.

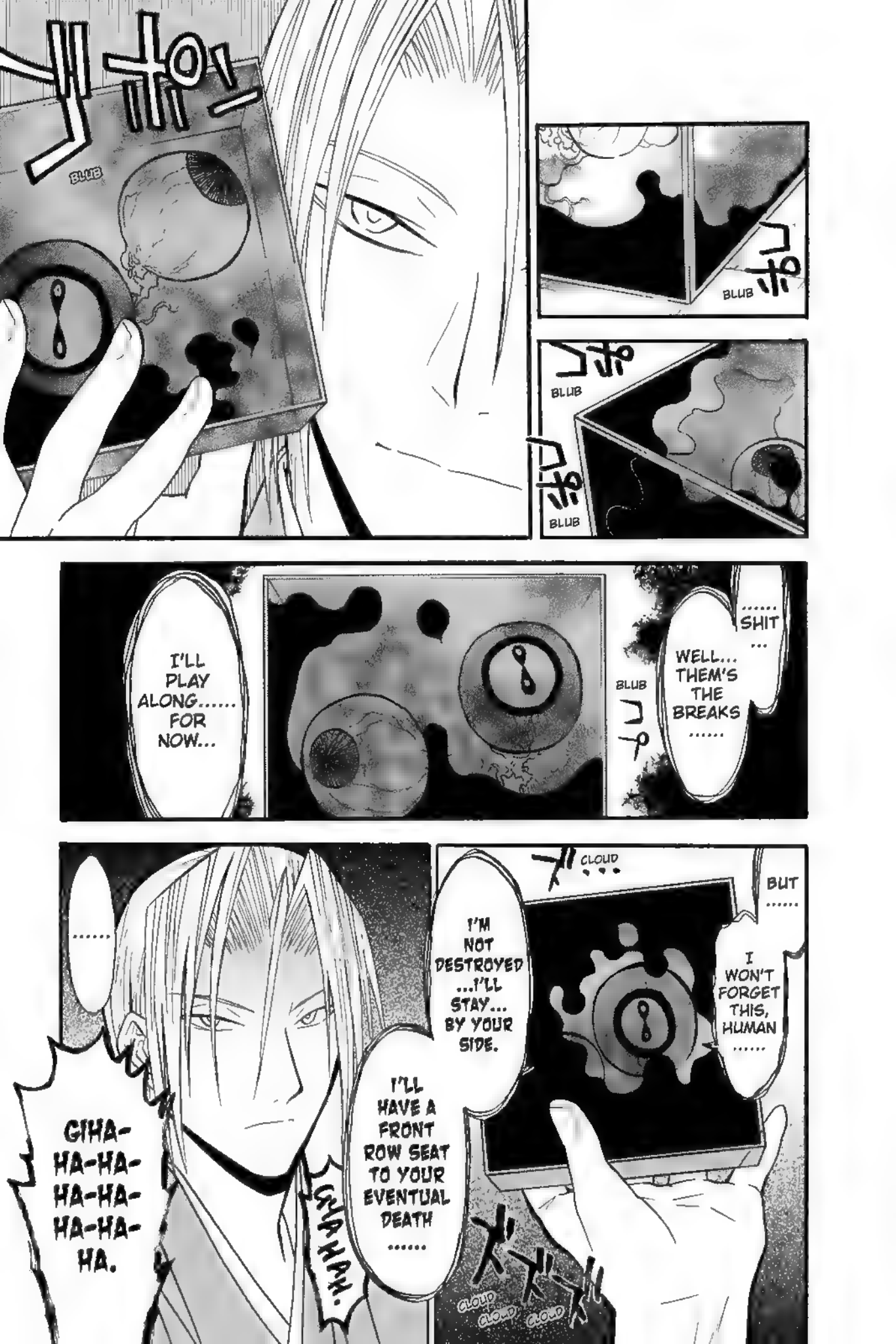

GLAD TO SEE YOU'VE CAUGHT ON.
YES.
YOU WERE USING ME .....?
.....
NO... ALL ALONG ...


YOU ALONE ARE LACKING, BUT WITH THE ADDITION OF THAT EYE— BATHED IN THE CONTENTS OF MY LAST CASKET—YOU ARE CLOSE ENOUGH TO PERFECT.
AMONG SHIKABANE, YOU ARE THE CLOSEST WE HAVE TO AN EMBODIMENT OF "FINAL REGRETS."
YOU BURROW INSIDE PEOPLE AND FEAST ON THEIR DEATHS.


AND THAT IS A BENEFIT VALU-ABLE BEYOND MEA-SURE.
POP


SO SOON .....
.....
KICKBACK FROM USING THE CASKET
ABOVE ALL ELSE, USING THE EYE VIA A PROXY MEANS I WON'T EXPERIENCE ANY RECOIL, AS I DID EARLIER.


THUNK

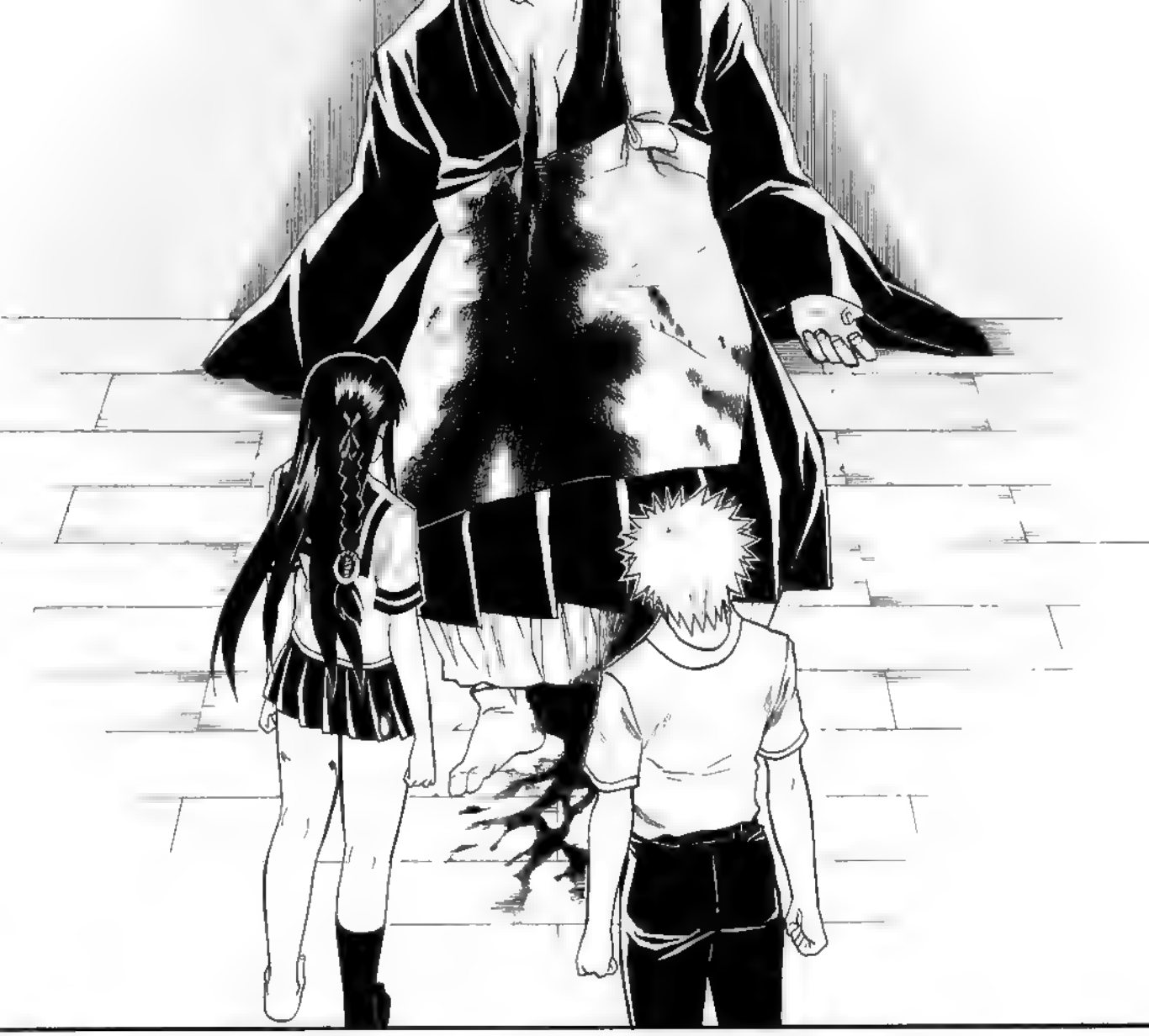

BLUB
BLUB
BLUB
BLUB
.....SHIT...
WELL... THEM'S THE BREAKS .....
I'LL PLAY ALONG..... FOR NOW...
.....
GIHA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
GRRHM.
I'LL HAVE A FRONT ROW SEAT TO YOUR EVENTUAL DEATH .....
I'M NOT DESTROYED ...I'LL STAY... BY YOUR SIDE.
CLOUD
CLOUD
CLOUD
CLOUD
BUT .....
I WON'T FORGET THIS, HUMAN .....

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
DAYBREAK.

THE DAY I TURNED 16.

DAYBREAK, AFTER THAT LONG NIGHT.

I LOST A BROTHER. A FATHER FIGURE. A FRIEND...

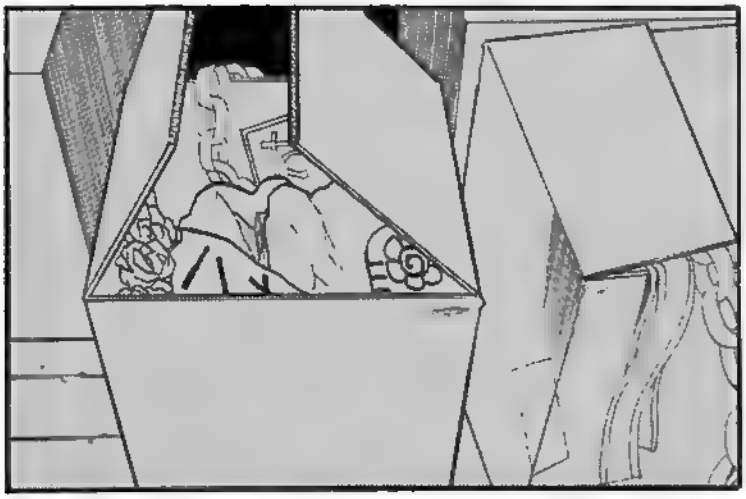


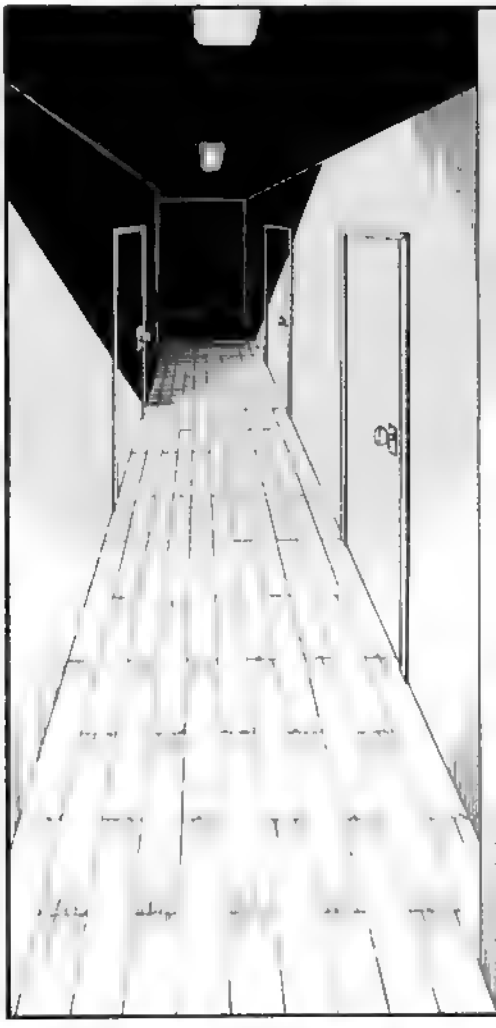
.....AND
BECAME A
CONTRACTING
MONK.

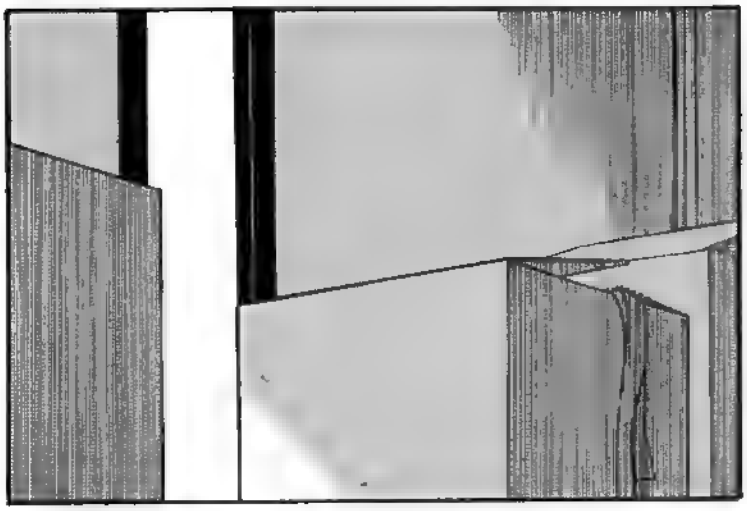
CORPSE PRINCESS
4

DEATH 16: FUNERAL

FLAP





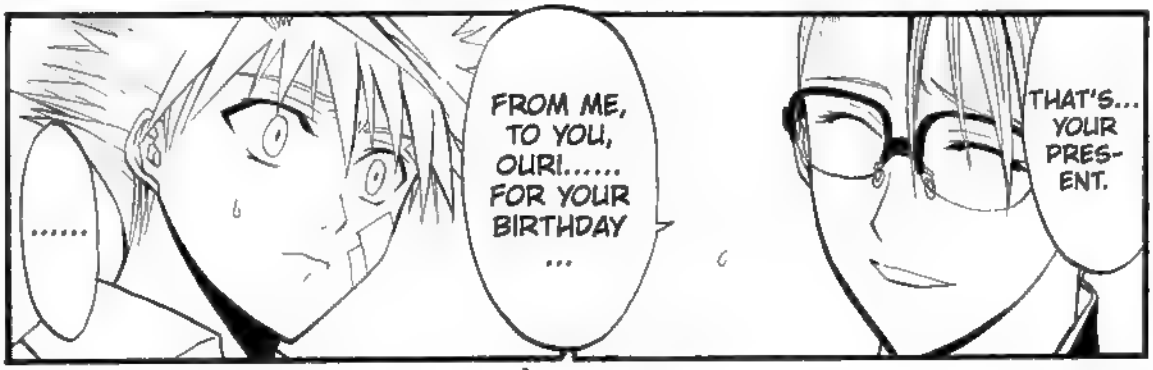


DONG

TWO DAYS LATER.
AND I...
THEIR JOB WASN'T TO FIGHT— JUST TO CLEAN UP, APPARENTLY.
THEY FIXED IT TO MAKE BIG BRO'S DEATH SEEM LIKE AN ACCIDENT TO THE PUBLIC.
AFTERWARD— AFTER THAT BATTLE— MORE THAN TEN MONKS SHOWED UP.
ALL I COULD DO..... WAS STAND TO THE SIDE AND WATCH.
UNTIL IT WAS ALL OVER AND DONE WITH...
I HAVEN'T SEEN HOSHIMURA-SAN SINCE THEN.
..... COME TO THINK OF IT...

...SO WHY DON'T WE BEGIN PACKING UP THE ROOM?
THE CHILDREN HAVE ALL HEADED FOR THE CREMATO-RIUM WITH THE NEIGHBORS .....
OURI.
SHE LOOKS EVEN MORE EXHAUSTED THAN I DO.....NO WONDER.
SENSEI .....
SURE.
..... AH.
PLUS, SHE ALSO HAD TO SERVE AS CHIEF MOURNER. SHE'S HAD NO SLEEP SINCE YESTERDAY, AND IT'S SHOWING ON HER FACE.....
GLIDE
RIGHT AFTER WAKING UP..... HAVING ALL THIS HAPPEN. ANYONE WOULD BE.....
CLAK
TMP
CLAK

AH.
SENSEI... WHAT'S THIS .....?

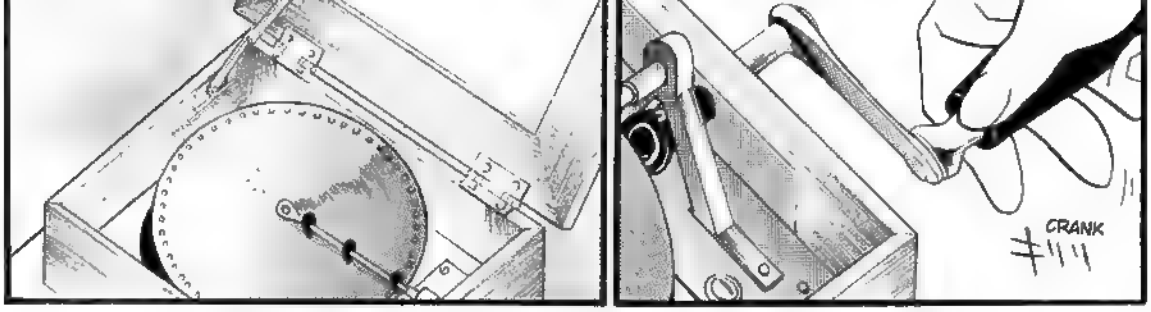

.....
FROM ME, TO YOU, OURI..... FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY ...
THAT'S... YOUR PRES-ENT.

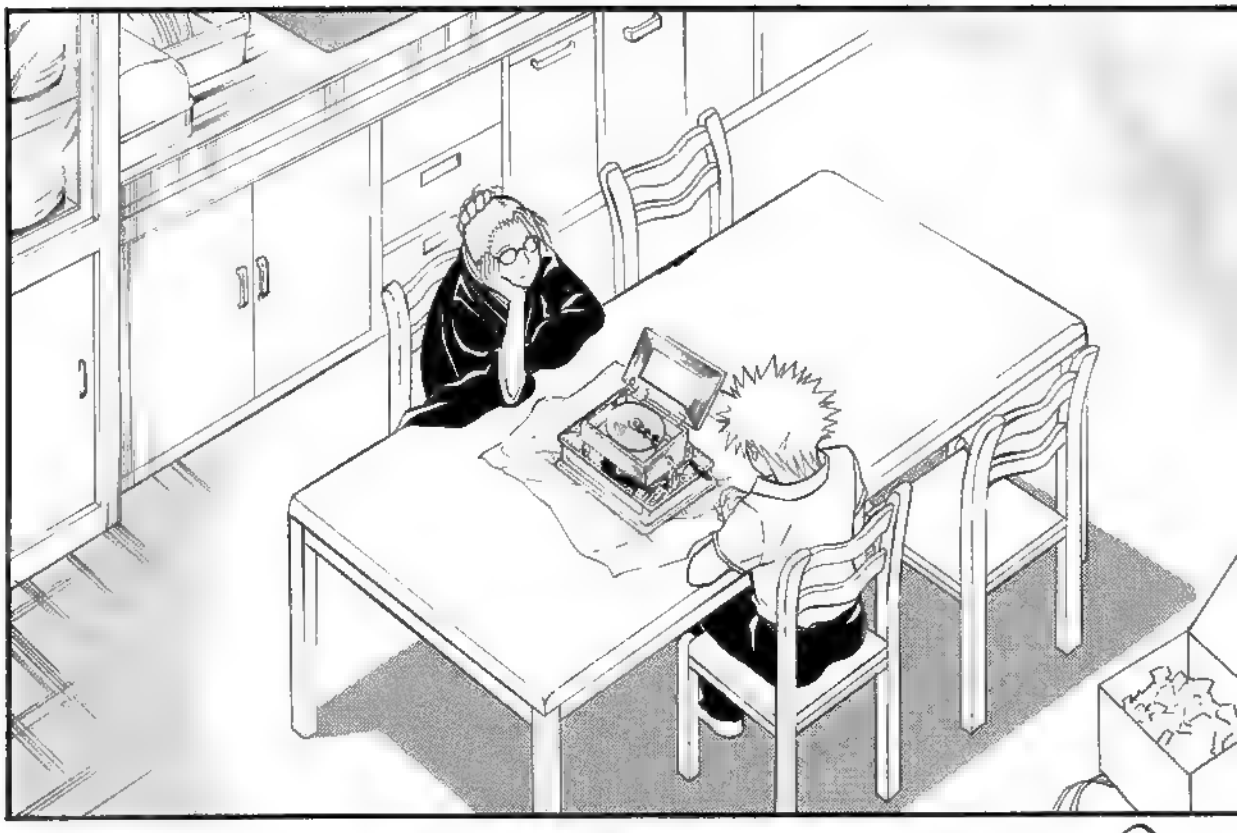
BAM!
魔法少女☆(巨乳ネコミミヒーメイド)ZENDAVOSS
MAGICAL GIRL (GIANT-BOOBED, CAT-EARED, SAILOR-SUITED MAID)
EH?
EHH?

I'M SORRY. I FORGOT TO GIVE IT TO YOU WITH ALL THAT'S BEEN GOING ON.
MM ...
NOT AT ALL... THANKS.

シュル
PULL
OH, I KNOW! YOU SHOULD OPEN IT NOW. NO BETTER TIME.

HE...
KEISEI SAID, "IT'S A NICE MUSIC BOX, SO IT SHOULD COME WITH A SOUNDING BOX"
.....
HE PICKED IT OUT HIMSELF AND STUFFED THE REAL PRESENT INSIDE.
.....SENSEI?
AH... AHEM. RIGHT.
THE PRESENT I GOT YOU IS ACTUALLY THIS MUSIC BOX
.....
YOUR ROOM'S ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE BARREN, OURI.
DAZZLE
カアアア
EHH.....
I KNOW. HE'S GOT NO TASTE.
HE BOUGHT IT WITHOUT STOPPING TO THINK ABOUT STYLE.
GOOD-FOR-NOTHING..... THAT GUY.
..... TRULY.


CRANK



GUESS THE SOUNDING BOX WAS A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL.
MM— HM.

REALLY NICE SONG.
.....

WHERE WOULD HE EVEN FIND SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
I MEAN .....
POKE

AH- HA- HA.
NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT THAT AWFUL DESIGN, BUT .....

BUT WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, HE PROTECTED US. WE ALWAYS FELT SAFE AROUND HIM.
AROUND THAT WEIRDO.
ALWAYS SUCH A SILLY, FRIVOLOUS, DEGENERATE MONK.
ALWAYS WITH HIS JUVENILE HOBBIES. ALWAYS TEACHING THE CHILDREN WEIRD THINGS...
...KEI-SEI.

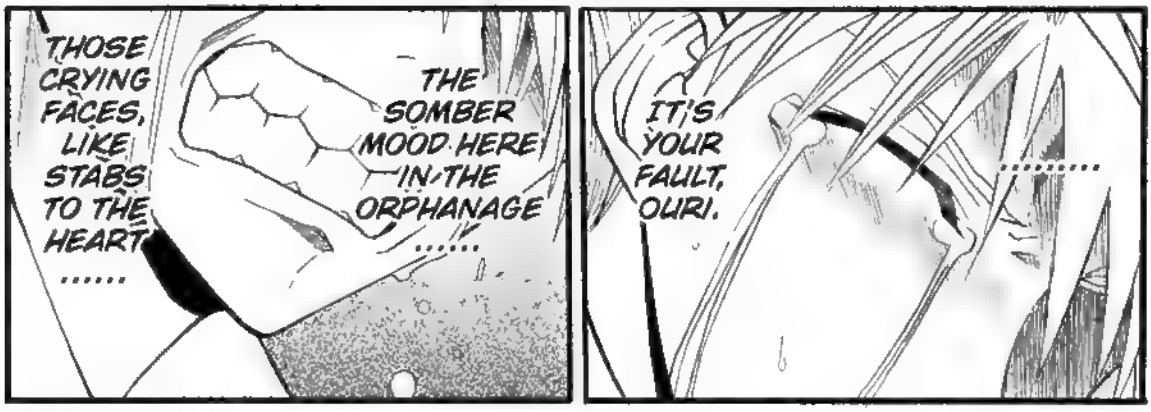
HA...
ISN'T THAT FUNNY. AH-HA-HA-HA.....
..."THAT WEIRDO."
...THE LAST THING TO COME OUT OF MY MOUTH IS ALWAYS...
WHEN-EVER I TALK ABOUT HIM...
FU FU.

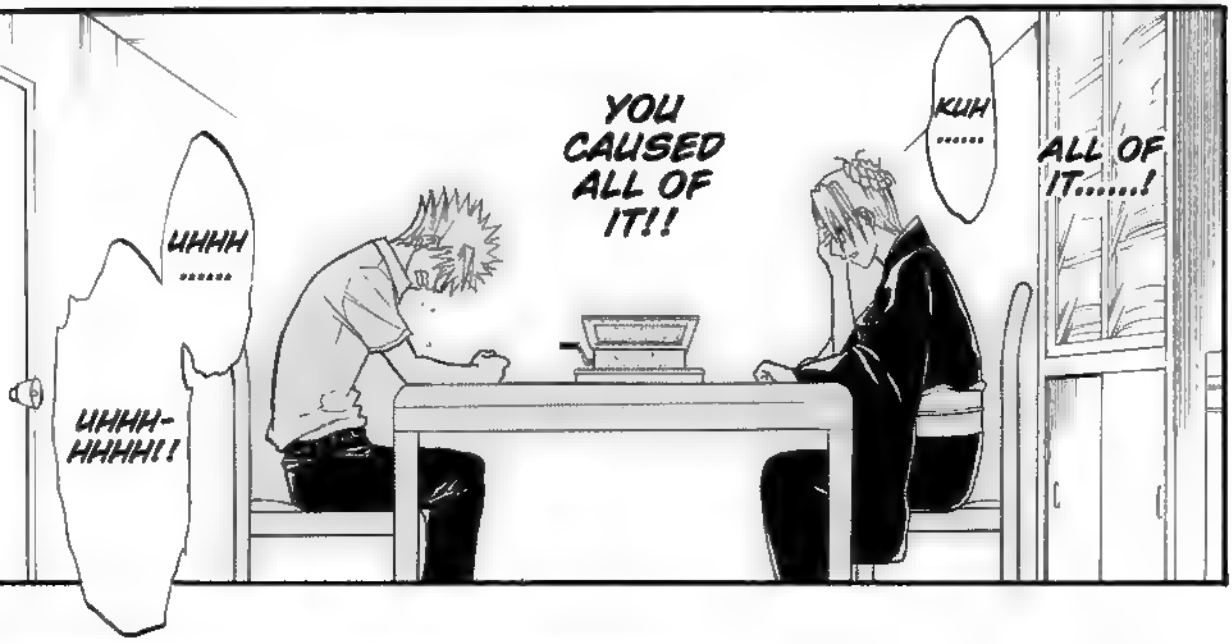
DRIP
DRIP
.....OURI.
AHHH.....
HAHH.
...

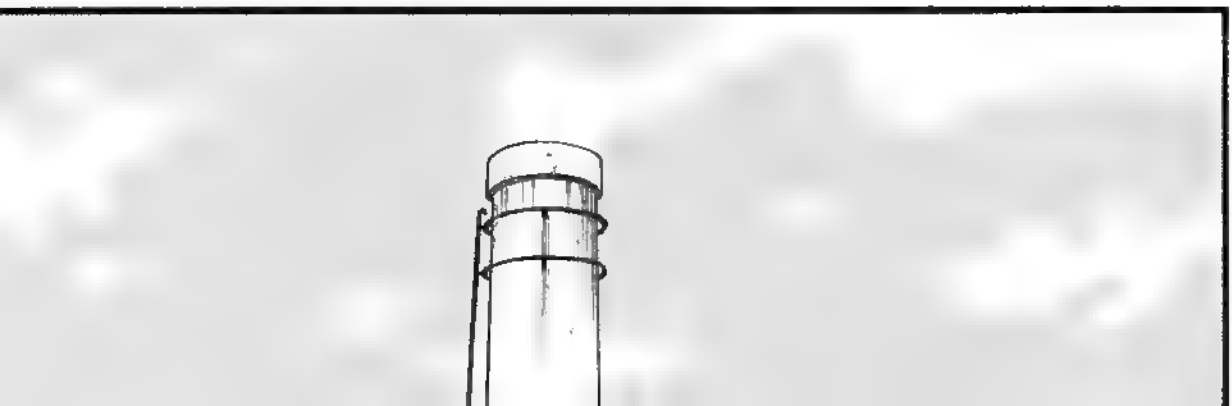
HE'S ...
... REALLY DEAD, ISN'T HE?

WE'RE REALLY .....
...NEVER GOING TO.....EAT BREAKFAST WITH HIM AGAIN.
DRIP

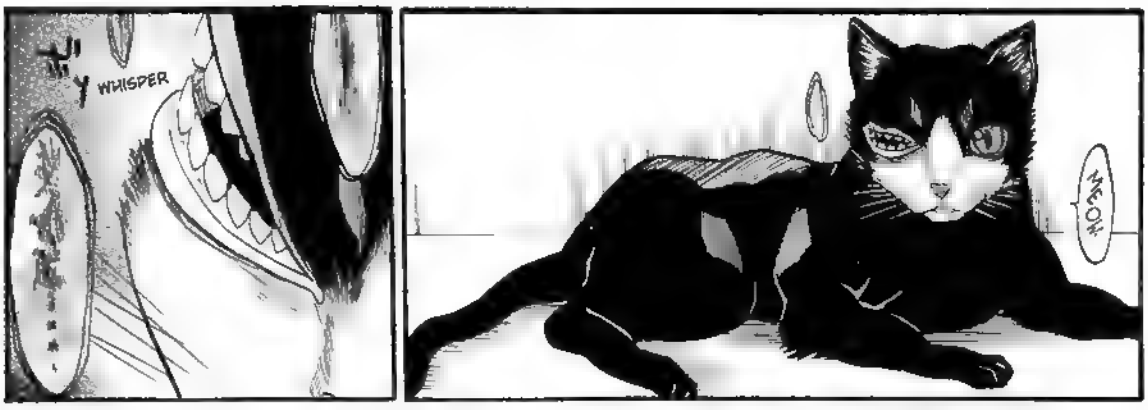
!!
WIPE
HE WAS ALWAYS WORRYING US, AND NOW.....
...HE'S GONE AND LEFT US WITHOUT A WORD .....
DRIP
DRIP
TRULY... SUCH A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING ...!


THOSE CRYING FACES, LIKE STABS TO THE HEART .....
THE SOMBER MOOD HERE IN THE ORPHANAGE .....
IT'S YOUR FAULT, OURI.
.....


UHHH .....
UHHH-HHHH!!
YOU CAUSED ALL OF IT!!
KUH .....
ALL OF IT.....!



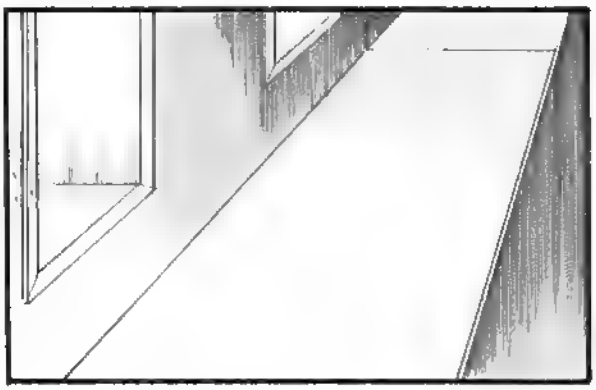
WAHHH.
HIC.
UHH.
.....
!
TURN
EWID
BADUM


WHISPER
MEOW

ITS EYE... LOOKS LIKE A MOUTH .....
SOMEHOW, IT'S TALKING .....?
NO.....
WHAT THE—? A CAT .....?

!?
WHISPER
WHISPER
KUHN ...
LIKE PLEASE ...
THAT MONS
KILL FOR ME.
WHISPER
OMI- NOUS DEATH OMEN.
HEY
WHIP

.....A HALLU-CINATION..... MAYBE?
.....IT'S GONE. ...WHAT..... WAS THAT.....?



?

UMM..... THAT MONK GUY OVER THERE..... I THINK HE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU, OURI.
YU'I GUANCE

..... OURI ?
YOU OKAY ?
HINA .....

BOW
FLAP
.....
FIRST... I OFFER MY CONDO-LENCES.
YOUR LOVED ONE WAS A RESPECTED SUPERIOR OF MINE. IT IS AS THOUGH WE'VE LOST A GUIDING LIGHT.
..... YEAH.
THANK YOU.
.....UM. WHO ARE YOU.....?

I'VE BEEN APPOINTED TO THIS DISTRICT'S BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
.....
BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION?
I AM RINSEN SHIRAE.
...RIGHT.
I'VE NOT YET INTRODUCED MYSELF.

FINALLY...
...I AM IN CHARGE OF FUNERARY PROCEEDINGS FOR MARTYRS, AS IN THIS CASE.
WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM ME?
..... SO...
..... MARTYRS.
MY JOB IS PROVIDE BACKUP TO MONKS BATTLING ON THE FRONT LINES.
I ALSO SELECT THE JUNIOR MONKS WHO SERVE THE PROTECTORS ...
...AND AM RESPONSIBLE FOR POST-BATTLE COVER-UPS AND INFORMATION MANIPULATION.

IT IS MY UNDER-STANDING THAT HIS EMINENCE WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU DIRECTLY.
I'VE BEEN INFORMED THAT BEFORE HIS PASSING, THE SHOU-SOUJOU TRANSFERRED HIS CONTRACT TO YOU. THIS IS UNPRECE-DENTED.
WELL .....
AH, YES.
HIS EMI-NENCE?
SOU-JOU, YOUR EMI-NENCE.
KNOCK
KNOCK
I'VE BROUGHT OURI KAGAMI-DONO.
THAT'S THE THIRD HIGHEST RANK IN THE KOUGON SECT... ISN'T IT?
"SOUJOU" .....
..... HELLO.
I AM SOUGEN TAKAMINE, SOUJOU OF THE KOUGEN SECT.
MY DEEPEST CONDO-LENCES.

HIS EMINENCE IS ONE OF THE SIX SOUJOU IN THE KOUGEN SECT, WHO, COMBINED, LEAD ABOUT SIX MILLION FOLLOWERS.
SHOW HIM THE UTMOST RESPECT.
..... RIGHT ...
WAY TO TURN UP THE PRES-SURE.
SHIRAE... NO NEED TO BE SO FORMAL.
I MERELY... WISH TO SPEAK WITH HIM.
WITH ME...
... REALLY ?
YES... HE..... KEISEI WAS MY FIRST PUPIL.
THOUGH I SAW HIM AS A POORLY-RAISED, FOOLISH SON..... HE WAS A GOOD MAN .....
..... THAT'S WHY I WISH TO KNOW OF HIS END.
PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT IT.
...I SEE.
SO IN THE END, HE DIED PROTECTING HIS FAMILY.....

I'M SORRY .....!
STAND
!
BOW
IT WAS ALL..... MY FAULT.
ALL BECAUSE I DIDN'T LISTEN TO BIG BRO'S INSTRUC-TIONS..... I WAS CONTROLLED .....
BIG BRO DIED..... BECAUSE OF MY ACTIONS.
IT'S ALL .....
...BECAUSE I'M A FOOL!!

NO MATTER HOW PREPARED ONE IS, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY MERE HUMAN COULD ESCAPE THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME .....
SHIKABANE CANNOT SUPPRESS THE URGE TO KILL. THEY CAN'T BE REASONED WITH, AND THEY PURSUE THEIR PREY TO THE END. THEY'RE ALSO HIGHLY INTELLIGENT.
I DOUBT IT COULD HAVE GONE ANY OTHER WAY.
CLUNK
..... NO.
!?

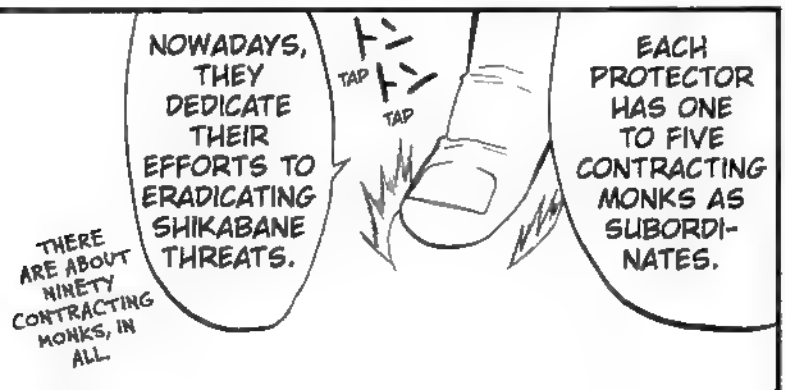
IT PAINS ME TO ADMIT, BUT THE ENEMY THIS TIME WAS STRONGER.
THIS IS NO SINGLE PER-SON'S FAULT.
HE WAS ALSO NAIVE.

..... THAT'S OKAY.
..... UMM. I'VE GOT SOME-THING I NEED TO ASK.
BUT IT RELIEVES ME TO KNOW THAT, IN THE END, HE WAS A FOOL FOR FAMILY, JUST AS I EXPECTED.
I THANK YOU.
.....I'M SORRY. I'VE BROUGHT UP UN-PLEASANT MEMO-RIES.
GRIND
...!

ABOUT BIG BRO .....
I NEVER KNEW ABOUT THE WORK HE'S BEEN DOING UNTIL NOW.
CAN YOU EXPLAIN IT TO ME?

HUH ?
I WISH HE COULD HAVE EXPLAINED IT TO YOU HIMSELF, BUT ALAS.
OF COURSE .....

IN THE KOUGON SECT'S BATTLE AGAINST SHIKABANE, HE WAS ONE OF FIFTY HIGH-RANKING MONKS STATIONED THROUGHOUT JAPAN'S PREFECTURES.
WE CALL THEM "PROTEC-TORS."
ABOUT KEISEI'S WORK..... I MEAN.
..... ERR.


THERE ARE ABOUT NINETY CONTRACTING MONKS, IN ALL.
NOWADAYS, THEY DEDICATE THEIR EFFORTS TO ERADICATING SHIKABANE THREATS.
トン TAP トン TAP
EACH PROTECTOR HAS ONE TO FIVE CONTRACTING MONKS AS SUBORDI-NATES.

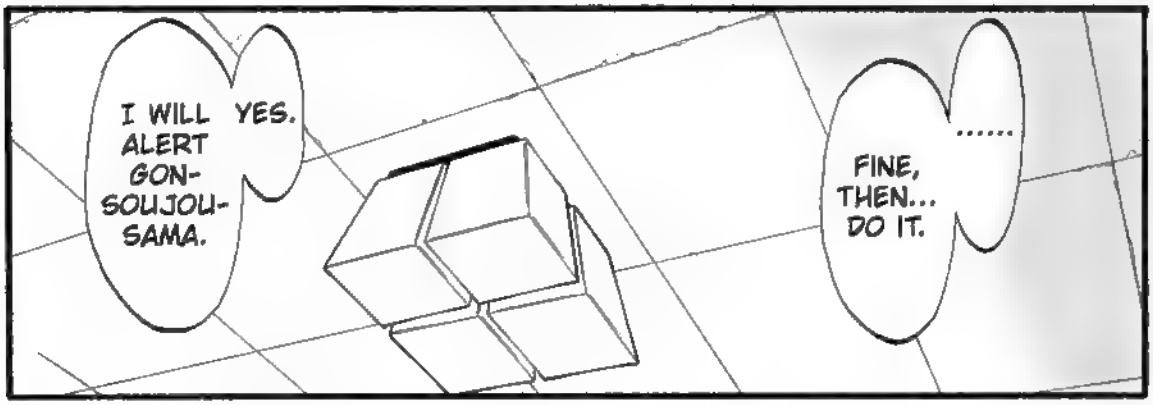
BUT WE LEARNED OF THESE PARTIC-ULAR ATTACKS TOO LATE.
AND SADLY, ONE OF THE CONTRACTING MONKS ASSIGNED TO THIS DISTRICT WAS KILLED RECENTLY.
.....
ORDINARILY, WE WOULD HAVE DISPATCHED BODYGUARDS TO EACH OF THE PROTECTORS WHEN UNDER THREAT OF AN ATTACK LIKE THIS.....

AS A SOUJOU OF THE KOUGON SECT, I MUST APOLO-GIZE.
AS YOU CAN SEE..... A NUMBER OF CONFLATING CIRCUMSTANCES LED TO THIS UNFORTUNATE OUTCOME .....

YOUR EMI-NENCE.
.....
.....
THANK YOU.
NO ...
THAT'S .....
HE'S REALLY BEING CONSID-ERATE TO ME .....

.....
BUT I HAVEN'T YET GOTTEN TO THE MAIN POINT.
IT'S NEARLY TIME TO RETURN TO THE HEAD TEMPLE FOR THE MEETING WITH THE POLICE'S SUPERIN-TENDENT GENERAL.

.....IF I MAY BE SO PRESUMP-TUOUS, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH HIM.
YOU GO ON AND GET BACK, YOUR EMINENCE.
..... DON'T TELL ME...
YOU THINK I'M HESITANT.....? DO YOU, SHIRAE?
NO...
I MERELY THINK THAT I CAN EXPLAIN IT TO HIM IN A WAY HE'LL UNDER-STAND.

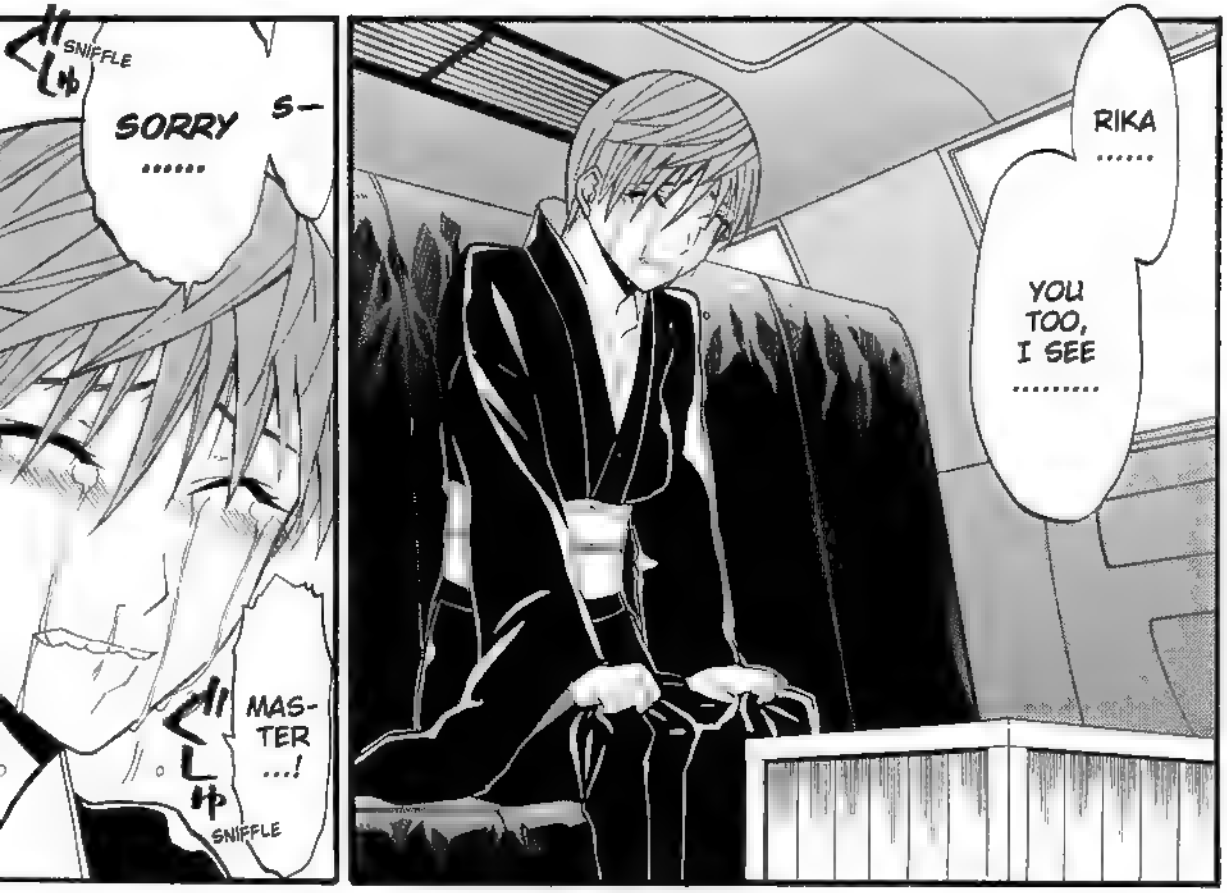

.....
FINE, THEN... DO IT.
YES.
I WILL ALERT GON-SOUJOU-SAMA.

I'M SORRY, KAGAMI-KUN.
WORK IS PILING UP, SO I MUST EXCUSE MYSELF EARLY.
... OH.
OKAY.
THANKS... FOR TALKING TO ME.
..... I'D LIKE ...
...TO SPEAK WITH YOU AGAIN, SOMETIME.

.....
?

FOR EVERY LOVED ONE'S FUNERAL I ATTEND .....
BONE-PICKING COMES AFTER THE CREMA-TION .....
...I FEEL AS THOUGH ANOTHER PART OF MY SOUL IS CUT OUT.

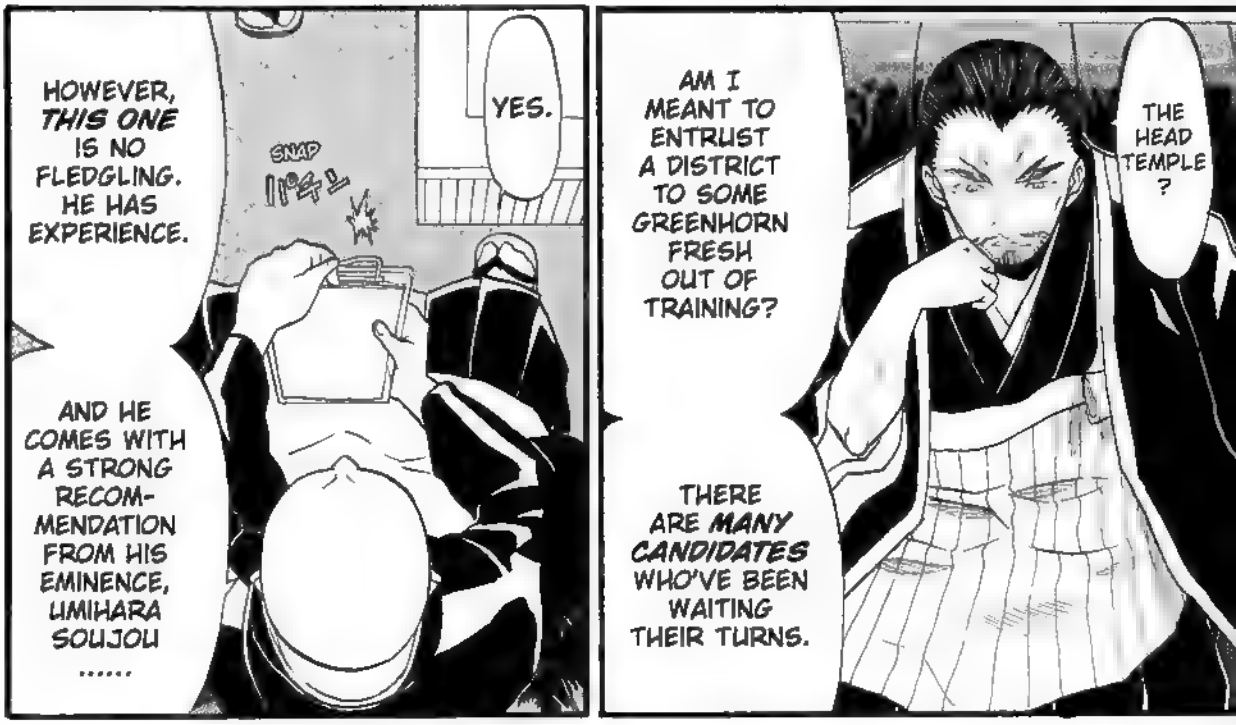
FOOLISH PUPIL THOUGH HE WAS, THAT IS THE GRAND LEGACY HE LEAVES BEHIND .....
THE CHILDREN FROM THAT ORPHANAGE ALL WEPT FOR KEISE! .....
INDEED, YOUR EMI-NENCE.


SNIFFLE
SORRY .....
S—
MAS-TER ...!
SNIFFLE
RIKA .....
YOU TOO, I SEE .....

YOUR EMI-NENCE.
BLOW

Y-YES!
...
IT'S FINE. WIPE YOUR NOSE.

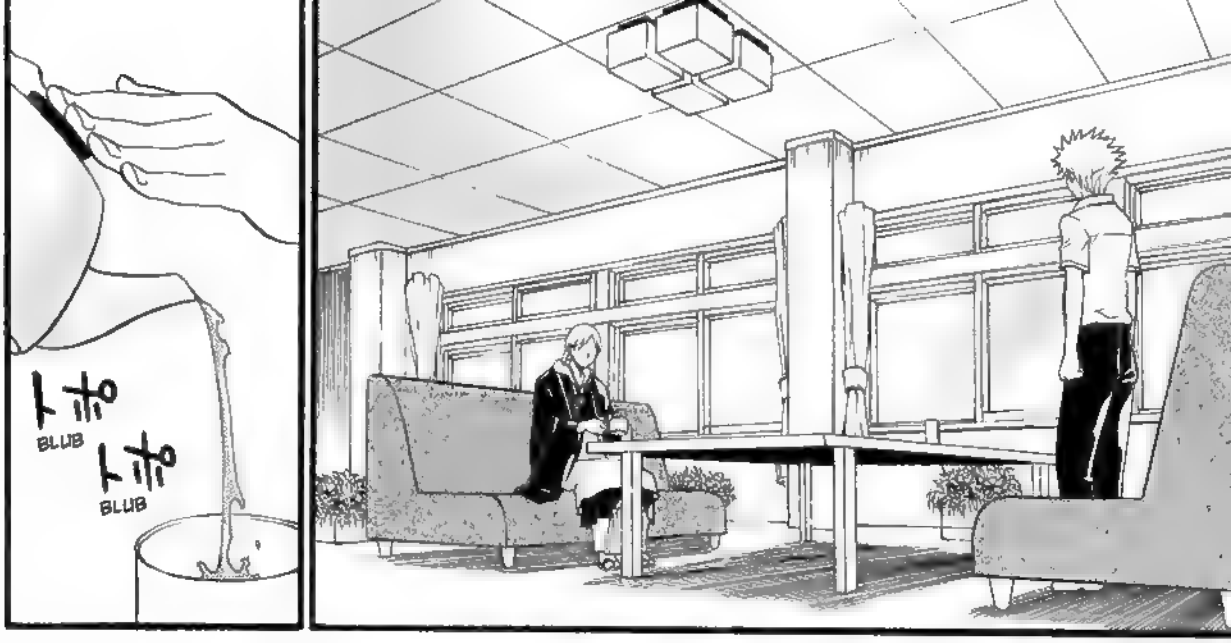
THIS REPRESENTS A BITTER LOSS.
REPLENISHING OUR FORCES IS TOP PRIORITY, SO THE HEAD TEMPLE IS DISPATCHING REPLACEMENT PERSONNEL.
IN THIS LATEST SERIES OF ATTACKS, FIVE PROTECTORS AND EIGHTEEN WARRIORS WERE MARTYRED.
CONCERNING THIS DISTRICT'S NEXT PROTECTOR .....
RIGHT.
I COULD HAVE DONE WITH A BIT MORE TIME TO GRIEVE .....

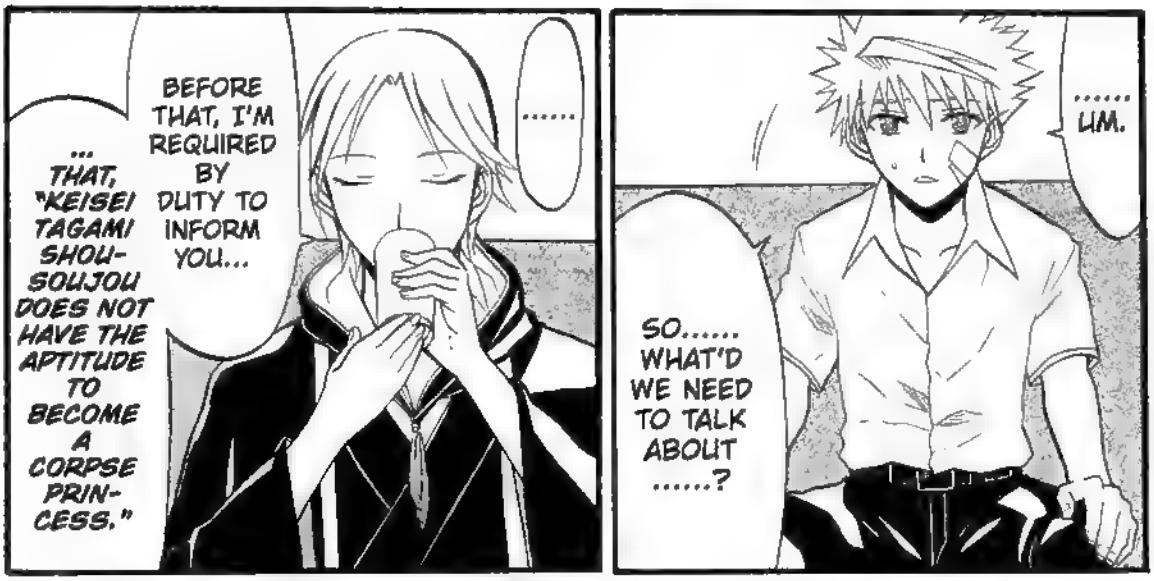

HOWEVER, THIS ONE IS NO FLEDGLING. HE HAS EXPERIENCE.
SNAP
YES.
AND HE COMES WITH A STRONG RECOMMENDATION FROM HIS EMINENCE, UMIHARA SOUJOU .....
AM I MEANT TO ENTRUST A DISTRICT TO SOME GREENHORN FRESH OUT OF TRAINING?
THE HEAD TEMPLE?
THERE ARE MANY CANDIDATES WHO'VE BEEN WAITING THEIR TURNS.

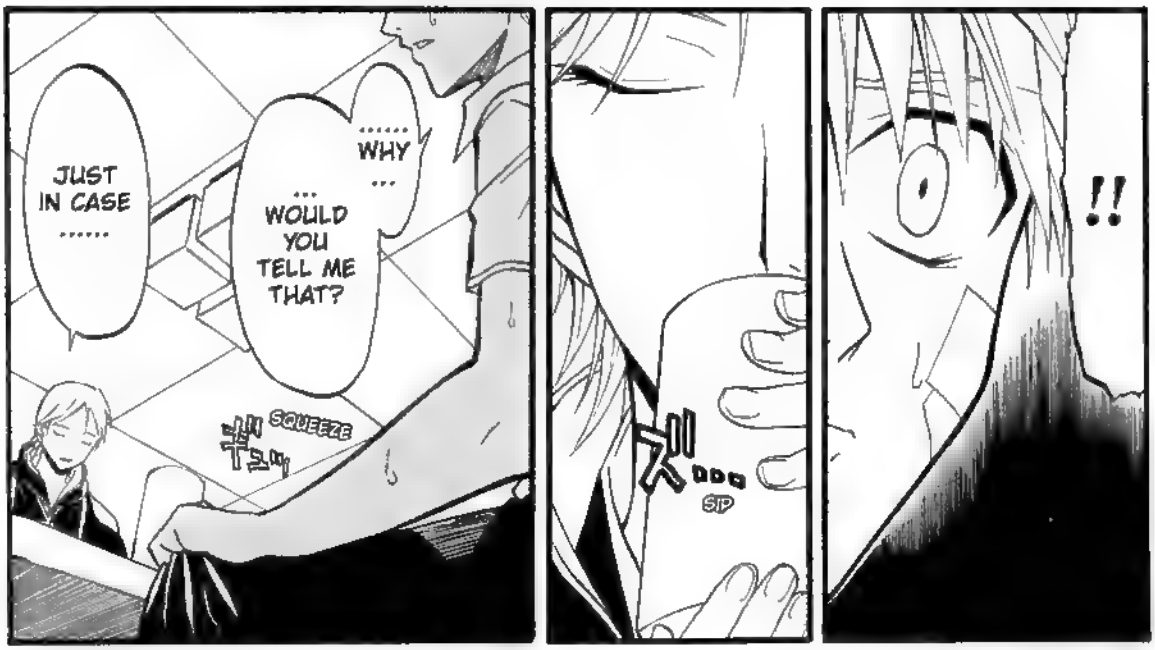
.....
OH.
THE VERY SAME.
UMIHARA?
HIS PUPIL THEN?

THE DISTRICT THAT INCLUDES IKAI CITY AND YANATSU CITY WILL BE MANAGED BY THIS NEW SYSTEM.
YES.
THE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IS ALSO UNDERGOING HR CHANGES. I WILL BE REPLACED BY SHIRAE .....
I SEE..... I'VE HEARD OF THIS ONE.
HE MAY BE A GOOD PICK.
CREAK
...NO OBJECTIONS.
THIS IS THE GONDAI-SOUJOU'S DECISION... WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT HIS HEAVILY-CONSIDERED INTENTIONS.
WELL..... THOUGH I CAN'T SAY I'M HAPPY ABOUT IT, STILL.....
..... WITH THIS, THOUGH, THE DISTRICT WILL BE OUT OF MY HANDS ENTIRELY .....

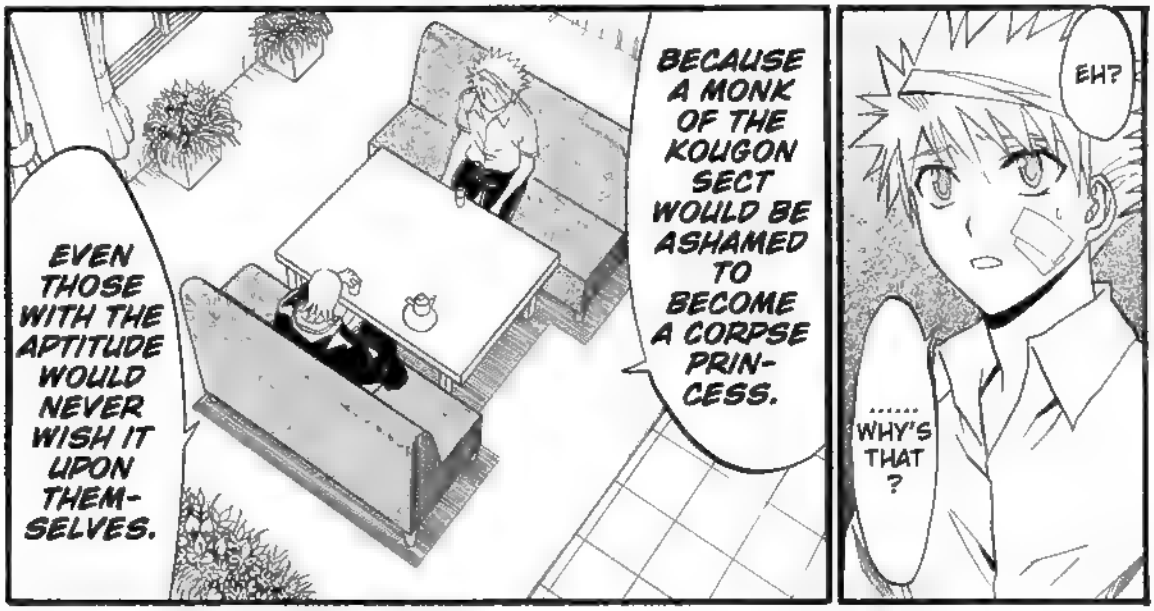
UNDER-STOOD.


BLUB
BLUB

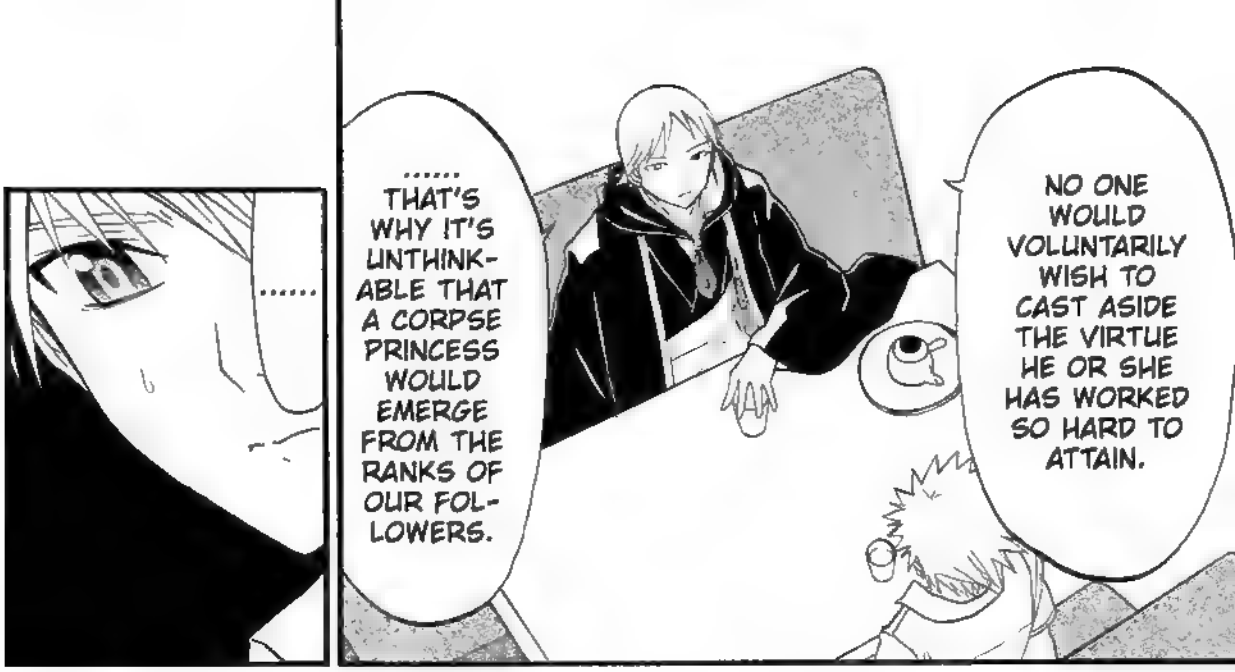

...
BEFORE THAT, I'M REQUIRED BY DUTY TO INFORM YOU...
THAT, "KEISEI TAGAMI SHOU-SOUJOU DOES NOT HAVE THE APTITUDE TO BECOME A CORPSE PRIN-CESS."
.....
UM.
SO..... WHAT'D WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT .....?

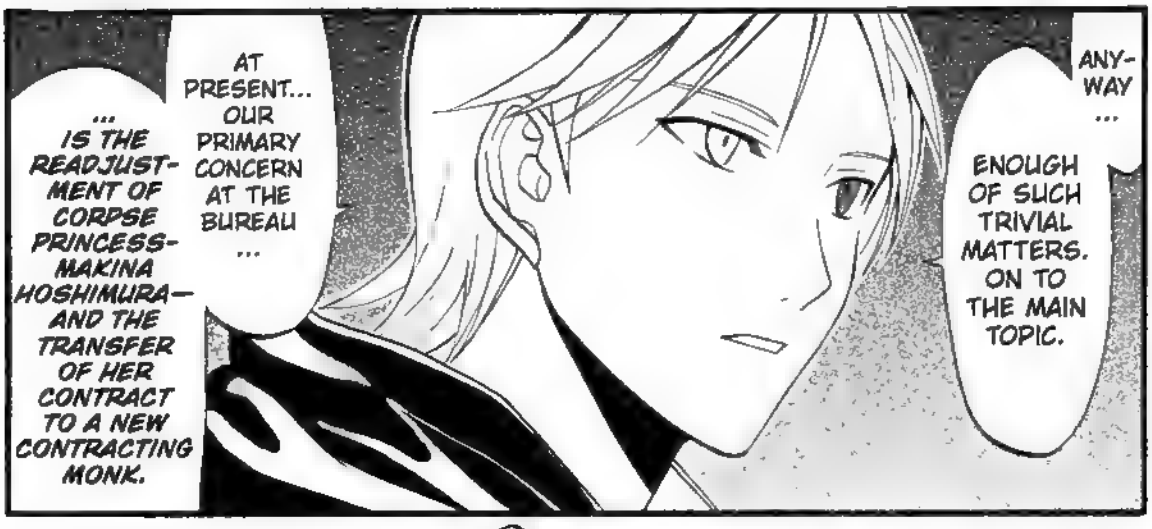

JUST IN CASE .....
..... WHY ...
... WOULD YOU TELL ME THAT?
SQUEEZE
SIP
!!

NOW AND THEN... PEOPLE ASK.
FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE KNOW REQUEST THAT THEIR LOVED ONE BE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE AS A CORPSE PRINCESS.
AS SUCH, IT'S CUSTOMARY ON THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL TO REPORT THE FINDINGS OF OUR EXAMINATION.
...SO BIG BRO'S ...
... REALLY GONE ...
YES. SADLY.
BUT I BELIEVE THAT IS THE BETTER OUTCOME FOR THE MAN HIMSELF.


EH?
..... WHY'S THAT ?
BECAUSE A MONK OF THE KOUGON SECT WOULD BE ASHAMED TO BECOME A CORPSE PRINCESS.
EVEN THOSE WITH THE APTITUDE WOULD NEVER WISH IT UPON THEMSELVES.

WARRIOR MONKS SEE THE OWNERSHIP OF A CORPSE PRINCESS AS A STATUS SYMBOL..... BUT...
...THAT RESPECT IS IN NO WAY DIRECTED TOWARD THE CORPSE PRINCESS ITSELF.
BECAUSE SHIKABANE AND CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE THOSE LOST IN DEATH.
THEY ARE THE BEINGS FARTHEST FROM ENLIGHTENMENT.


.....
.....
THAT'S WHY IT'S UNTHINKABLE THAT A CORPSE PRINCESS WOULD EMERGE FROM THE RANKS OF OUR FOLLOWERS.
NO ONE WOULD VOLUNTARILY WISH TO CAST ASIDE THE VIRTUE HE OR SHE HAS WORKED SO HARD TO ATTAIN.


ANYWAY ...
ENOUGH OF SUCH TRIVIAL MATTERS. ON TO THE MAIN TOPIC.
AT PRESENT... OUR PRIMARY CONCERN AT THE BUREAU ...
... IS THE READJUSTMENT OF CORPSE PRINCESS-MAKINA HOSHIMURA— AND THE TRANSFER OF HER CONTRACT TO A NEW CONTRACTING MONK.

EH?
THAT IS TO SAY ...
...AS SOON AS HER NEXT CONTRACTING MONK IS CHOSEN ...
... WE ASK THAT YOU ANNUL YOUR OWN CONTRACT WITH THAT CORPSE PRINCESS.

I'M .....
I MEAN .....
..... NO.
.....
THAT'S WHY...
I ACCEPTED THAT CONTRACT FROM BIG BRO..... I MADE A PROMISE .....!
SQUEEZE
WHAT IS IT?
PLEASE, JUST HANG ON!!
SLAM
...!
WHAT .....! H- HOLD ON A SEC !!
I'M .....
Y- YES !
...THAT WE ALLOW YOU TO CONTINUE AS HER CON- TRACTING MONK?
.....YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY MEAN TO REQUEST ...
I'M SORRY TO BE SO BLUNT, BUT...
...YOUR ROLE IN THIS MATTER HAS ENDED.

QUITE FRANKLY ...
...NOW..... THAT YOU LIVE AT ALL IS MERELY A STROKE OF LUCK.
BY CONTINUING AS HER CONTRACTED MONK, YOU WOULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. YOU WOULD DIE A MEANINGLESS DEATH AT THE HANDS OF SHIKABANE .....
.....
...!

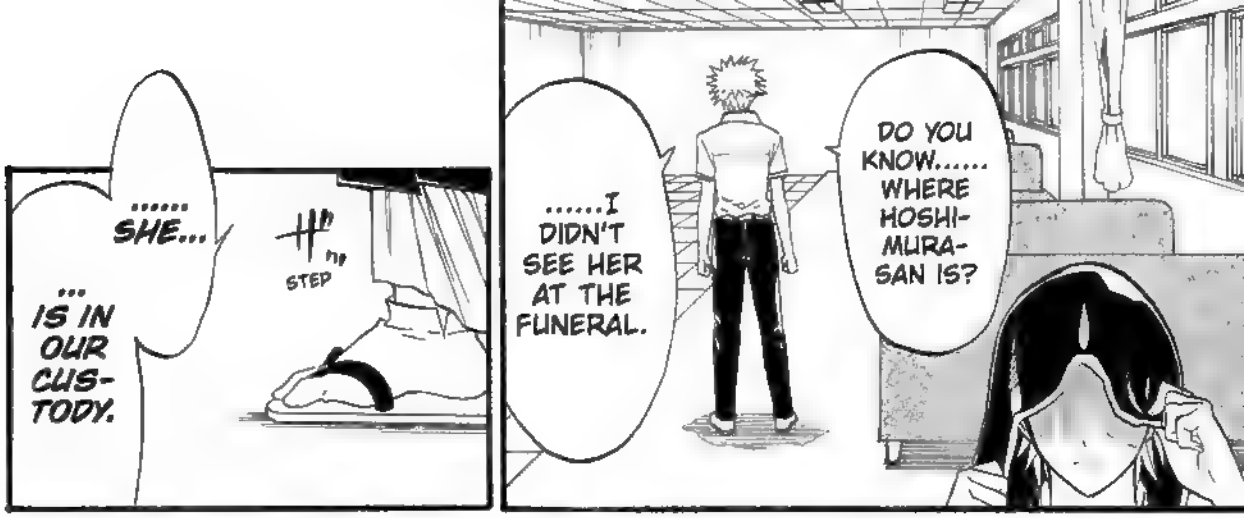
YOUR LIFE WAS MIRACULOUSLY SPARED, SO DON'T WASTE IT.
THAT IS ALL..... YOU SHOULD BE SATISFIED.

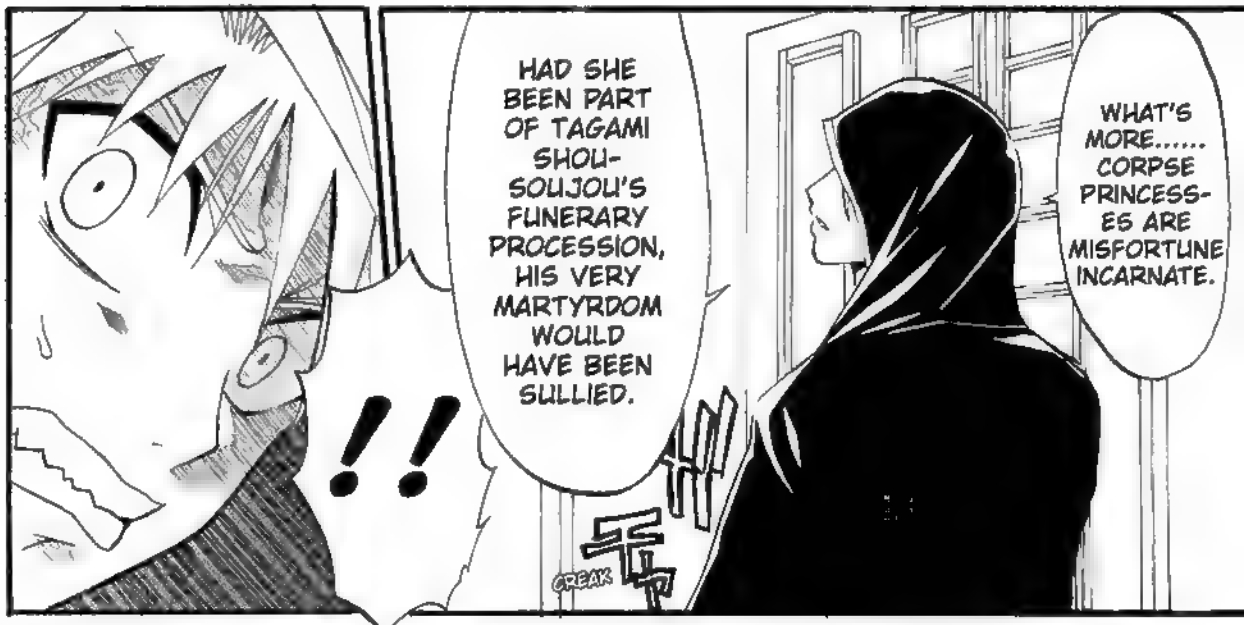
.....
YOU WERE NEVER A MEMBER OF THE KOUGON SECT CLERGY.
TO BEGIN WITH .....
PAT

...I CAN'T EVEN KEEP MY PROMISE TO BIG BRO!!

AND NOW...

I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING. I MADE SENSEI..... AND EVERYONE ELSE CRY .....


DO YOU KNOW..... WHERE HOSHI-MURA-SAN IS?
.....I DIDN'T SEE HER AT THE FUNERAL.
STEP
..... SHE... ... IS IN OUR CUS-TODY.


WHAT'S MORE..... CORPSE PRINCESS-ES ARE MISFORTUNE INCARNATE.
HAD SHE BEEN PART OF TAGAMI SHOU-SOUJOU'S FUNERARY PROCESSION, HIS VERY MARTYRDOM WOULD HAVE BEEN SULLIED.
CREAK
!!

.....!!
GRIND

KEI-
SEI
.....
YOU
...
...
IDIOT.

SO YOUNG.
HE'S TIED FOR SECOND YOUNGEST IN HISTORY.
AND HE'S EVEN A "GENPAKU"?

WHAT'S THAT?
A SPECIAL TITLE.
SORT OF AN ALIAS THAT ONLY SPECIALLY PICKED CONTRACTING MONKS GET TO USE.
...IN OTHER WORDS...

HEY.
YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS NEW PROTECTOR?
HMM?
HE'S ONLY NINETEEN.

...IT REFERS TO THE KOUGON SECT'S ELITE FIGHTING FORCES.
WHOA ...
SCARY.
...SHH! THEY'RE HERE.
TMP
SO THAT'S THE GENPAKU'S CORPSE PRINCESS ?
PRETTY CUTE.
FOOL !
THAT "CUTE" GIRL IS A HUNDRED TIMES STRONGER THAN YOU.
BESIDES, LOOK BEHIND HER.
CONTRACTING MONKS'RE SO LUCKY.
HHH!

BAM
SO THAT'S THE NEW PROTECTOR .....?
WHAT'S HIS NAME?
THE "GENPAKU" SHOU-SOUJOU.
TAKAMASA SOUGI.

DEATH 17: OMEN

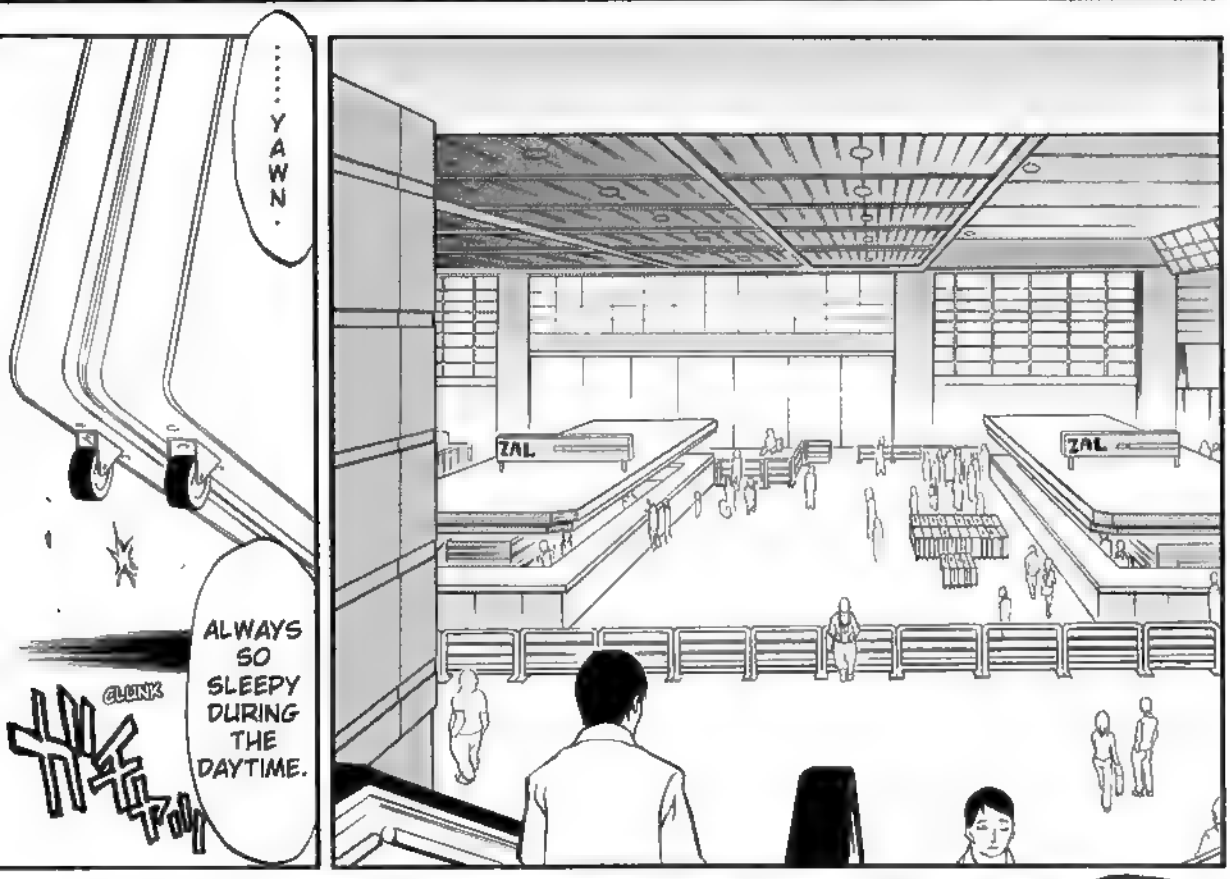
MAGICAL GIRL
(GIANT-BOOBED,
CAT-EARED,
SAILOR-SUITED MAID)
ZENBUNOSE...

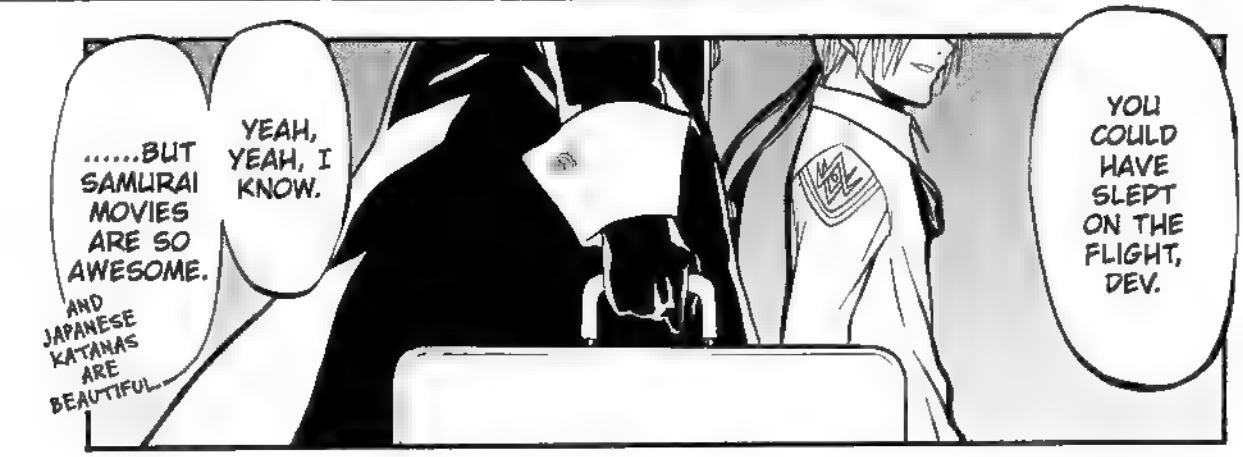
...HAS A RIVAL.

SORCERESS BATTLER
(FLAT-CHESTED,
TAILED, PIGTAILED,
ELF-EARED,
GYM OUTFIT-WEARING NURSE)
THUYUDAKU FULL SET

SHE'S MADE
HER DEBUT!!
(JUST THIS ONCE)

SCREEEE


.....YAWN.
ALWAYS SO SLEEPY DURING THE DAYTIME.
GLUNK
ZAL
ZAL


YOU COULD HAVE SLEPT ON THE FLIGHT, DEV.
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW.
.....BUT SAMURAI MOVIES ARE SO AWESOME.
AND JAPANESE KATANAS ARE BEAUTIFUL...

I REALLY WANNA GET ME ONE OF THOSE SWORDS.

NO.
NO GOOD WILL COME OF FOOLISHLY WIELDING A BLADE.

WONDER IF I CAN STEAL ONE FROM SOME-WHERE.
AFTER COMING ALL THIS WAY. AS A MEMENTO .....

IT IS A RETAINER'S DUTY TO ADVISE AND GUIDE HIS MASTER.
YES.
IS THAT HOW YOU TALK TO YOUR MASTER?
.....
YOU... COME ON, RIO!

HUH?
OH.
IS HE HERE TO WELCOME US, DEV?
JUST PICK YOUR WORDS MORE CAREFULLY, YOU SOPHIST.
THIS GUY ...

AEGIS DEVLORT-SAMA.

GREGORIO VLAUPNIR-SAMA.

I'VE BEEN EX-PECTING YOU.
I'M SURE YOU'RE TIRED FROM THE LONG JOURNEY.

IT'S NOT REALLY US..... THOUGH.
..... KEH.

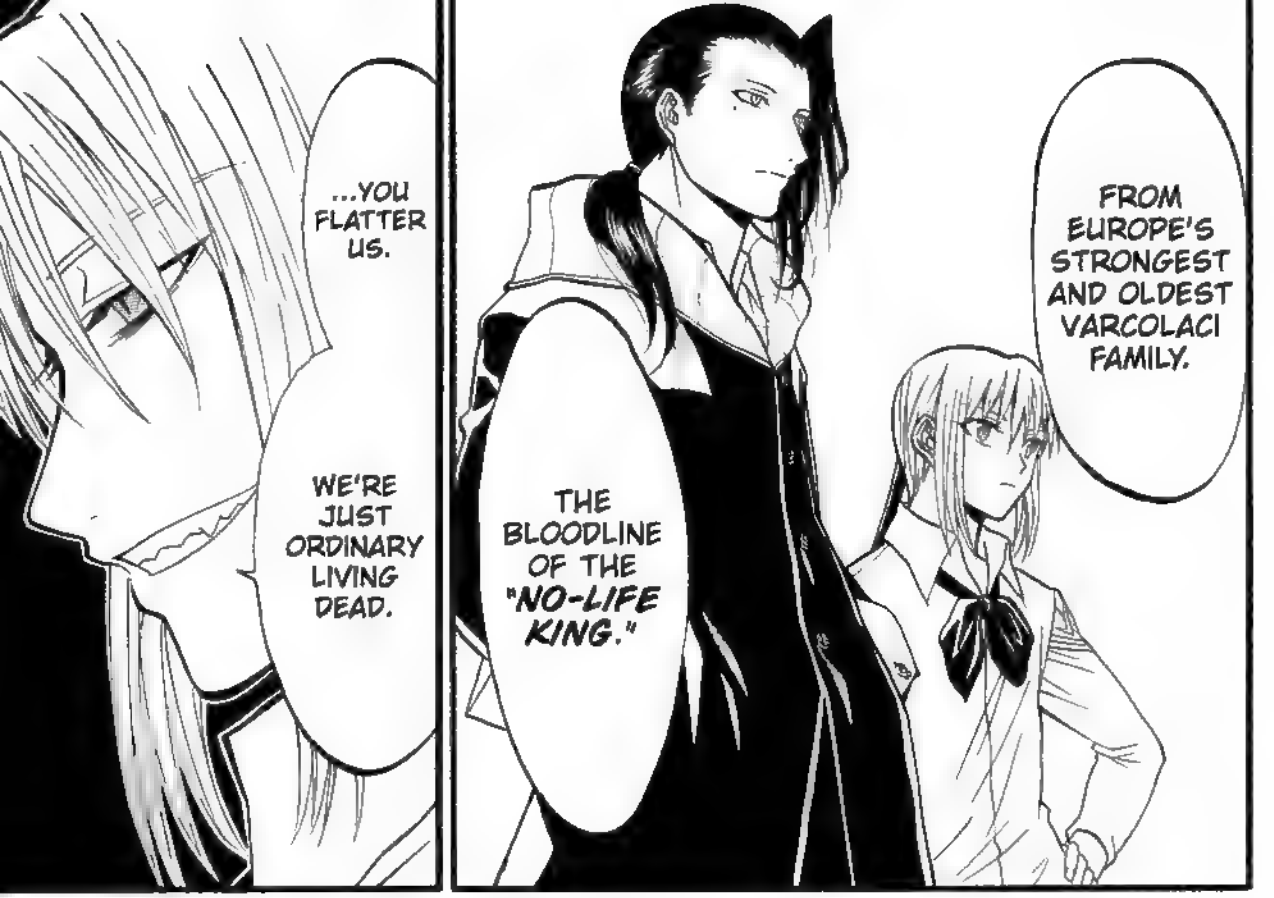
WITH YOUR ARRIVAL AND INCLUSION ...
...THE UNCLEAN BUNCH IS COMPLETE.

....IS WHAT YOU ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT.
TAP
THIS .....

SCRATCH
..... THAT SAID ...
NOT SURE HOW THIS OLD CURIO IS ANY USE TO YOU.

"GOD-KILLER."

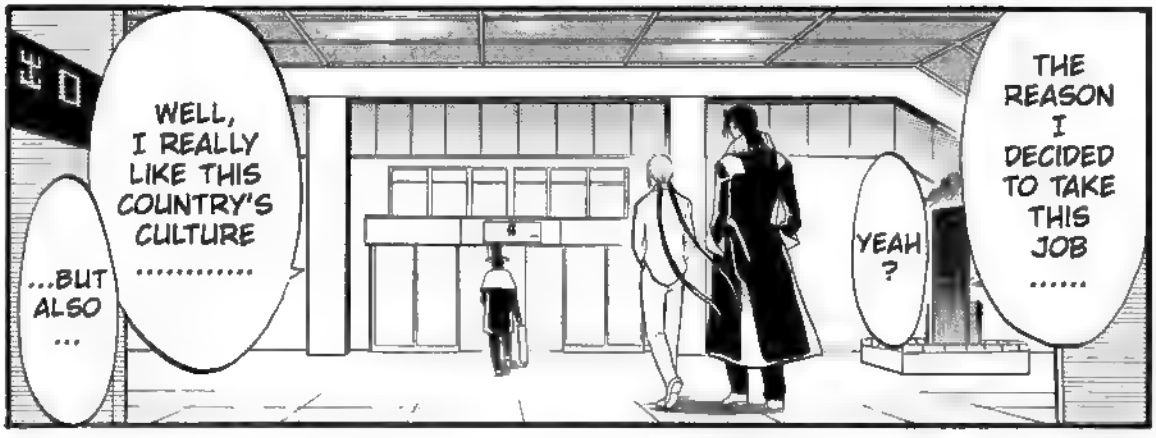
FURTHERMORE..... I'M PERSONALLY PLEASED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.
HMPH .....
IT'S THE LAST, CRUCIAL PUZZLE PIECE WE NEED TO RESURRECT OUR KING.

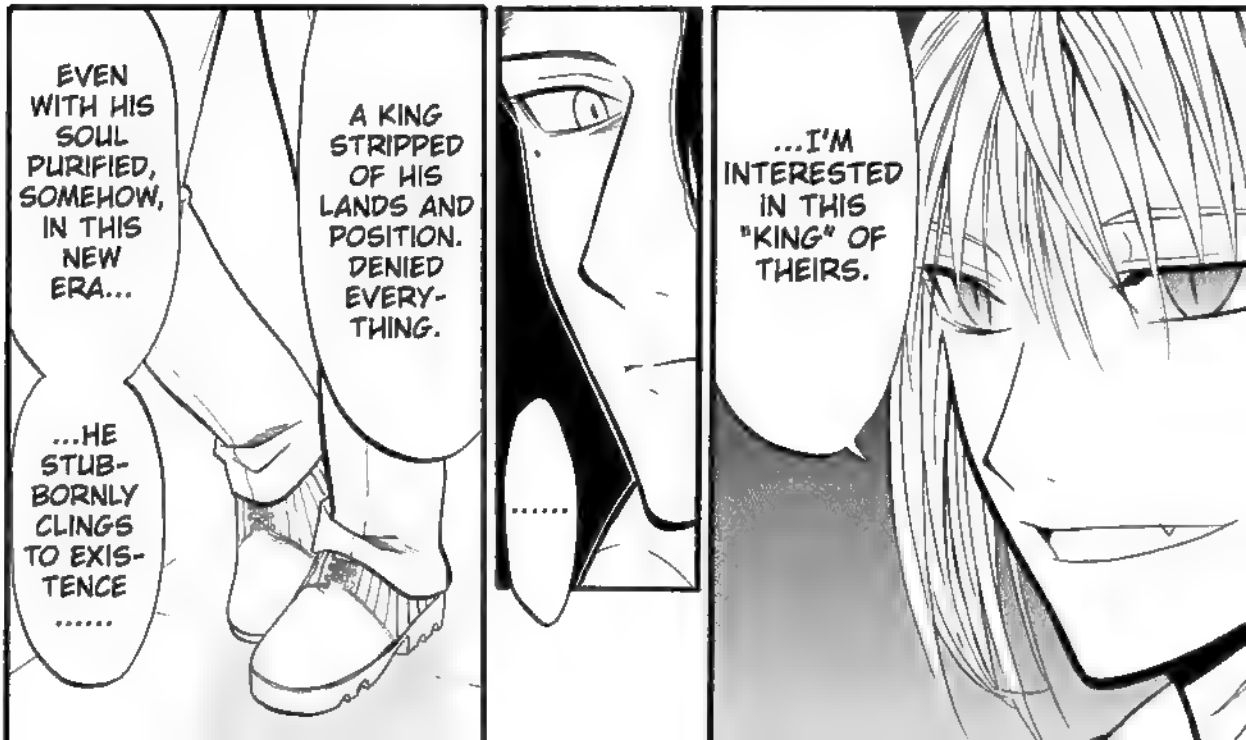

...YOU FLATTER US.
WE'RE JUST ORDINARY LIVING DEAD.
THE BLOODLINE OF THE "NO-LIFE KING."
FROM EUROPE'S STRONGEST AND OLDEST VARCOLACI FAMILY.

.....
A TRIBE OF REVENANT, EVER ON THE RUN FROM HUNTERS.
WE'VE LOST OUR LANDS AND PEOPLE.

..... KEH.
...WILL NEVER WAVER. NOT IN THE SLIGHT-EST.
AND THAT RESPECT .....
...TO US SORCERERS IN THE BUSINESS OF OVERCOMING DEATH, YOU'RE LIKE LIVING LEGENDS.
.....
WELL, NO MATTER WHAT YOU MAY THINK OF YOUR-SELF ...

...THE MOST CURSED PLACE IN THIS WORLD .....
TO OUR KING'S THRONE ...
NOW THEN .....
SHALL WE BE OFF?
I'LL GUIDE YOU.
.....
RIO.
HMM ?


...BUT ALSO ...
WELL, I REALLY LIKE THIS COUNTRY'S CULTURE .....
YEAH ?
THE REASON I DECIDED TO TAKE THIS JOB .....


EVEN WITH HIS SOUL PURIFIED, SOMEHOW, IN THIS NEW ERA...
A KING STRIPPED OF HIS LANDS AND POSITION. DENIED EVERY-THING.
...HE STUB-BORNLY CLINGS TO EXIS-TENCE .....
.....
...I'M INTERESTED IN THIS "KING" OF THEIRS.

THAT'S AMAZING.
THE STRONGEST POWER ON THIS EARTH. A SPIRIT UNTHREATENED BY ALL THE ARMIES OF THE WORLD .....!

IF I CAN DETER-MINE THE SOURCE OF HIS POWER .....
...OR EVEN JUST A WAY TO REVIVE OUR KINGDOM .....
...I MAY BE THAT MUCH CLOSER TO ATTAINING SUPREM-ACY.

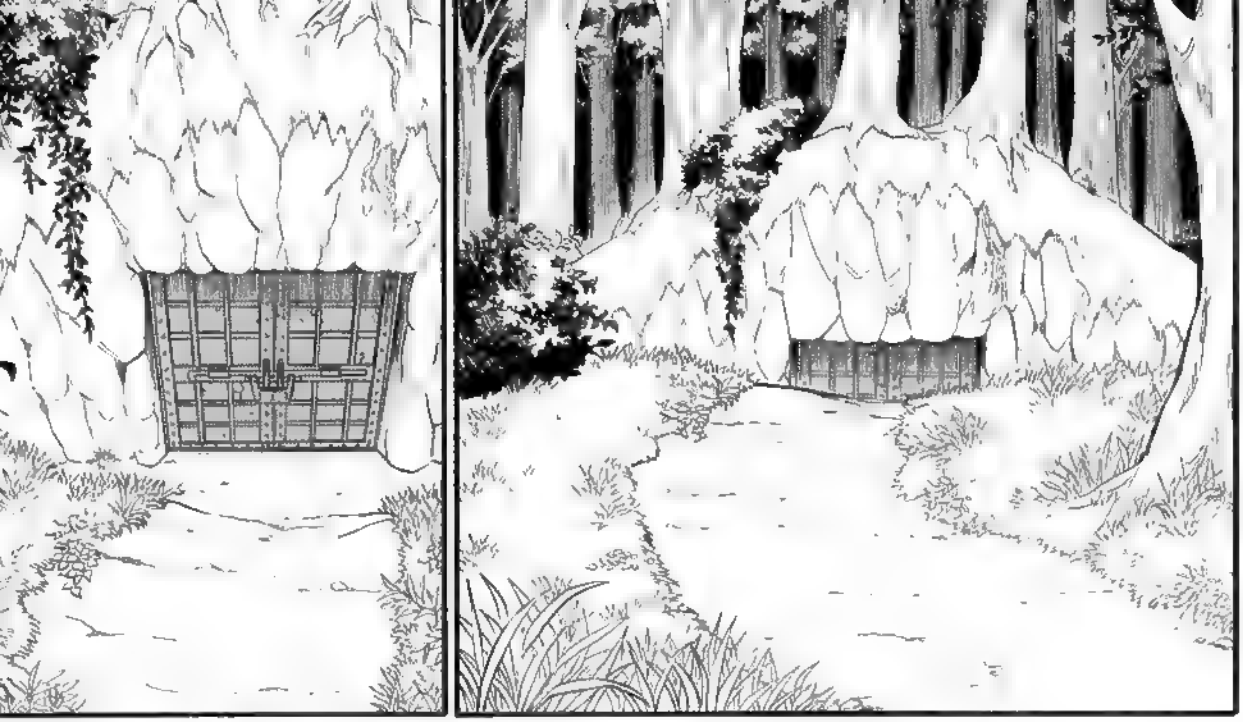
LIKE A GOD..... OR MAYBE EVEN THE DEVIL .....
AN EXISTENCE THAT SURPASSES HUMANITY WOULD NATURALLY INTEREST US.....

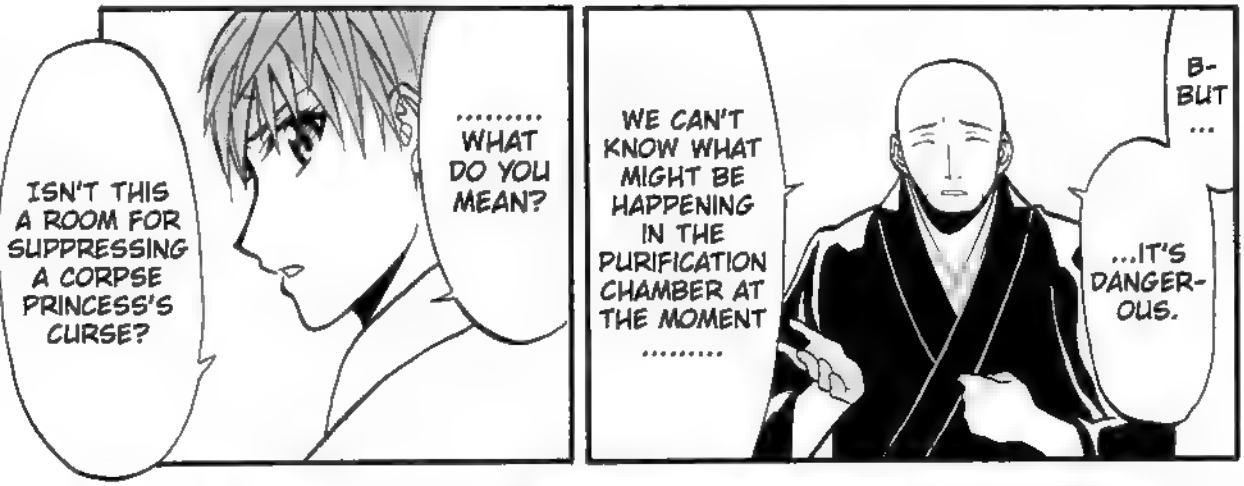
BUS PARKING ONLY
バスを除く
RIGHT.
I THOUGHT AS MUCH, AND THAT'S WHY I FOLLOWED YOU HERE.
MY MASTER.

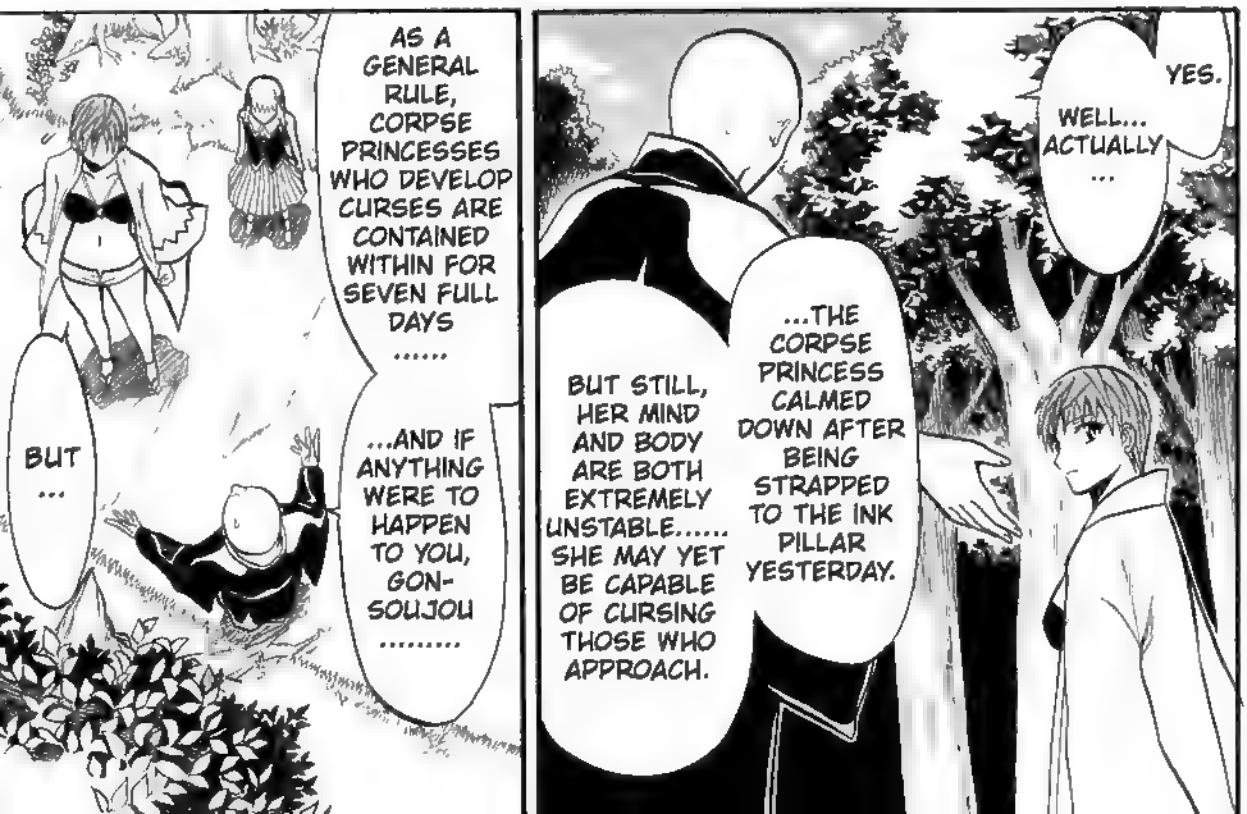
GRIN

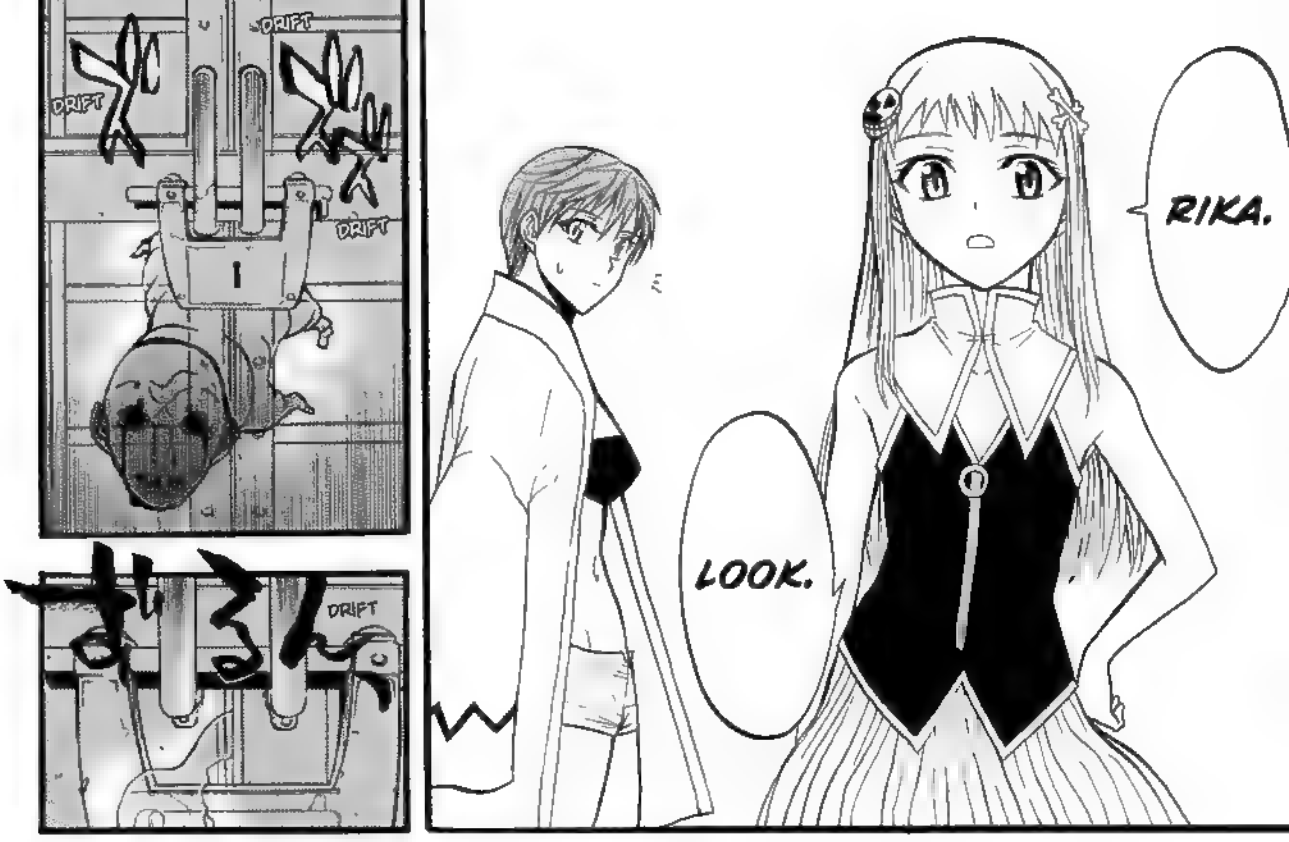
PLEASE WAIT, GON-SOUJOU .....!
WAIT .....

YOU NEEDN'T COME TO A PLACE LIKE THIS YOURSELF, GON-SOUJOU-SAMA .....
SORRY ..... IT'S JUST .....
STRUT
WHAT IS IT?
YAWN...
I'VE COME BECAUSE I HAVE BUSINESS WITH HOSHIMURA-SAN.
I DON'T CARE.




B-BUT ...
...IT'S DANGER-OUS.
WE CAN'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING IN THE PURIFICATION CHAMBER AT THE MOMENT .....
..... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ISN'T THIS A ROOM FOR SUPPRESSING A CORPSE PRINCESS'S CURSE?


YES.
WELL... ACTUALLY ...
...THE CORPSE PRINCESS CALMED DOWN AFTER BEING STRAPPED TO THE INK PILLAR YESTERDAY.
BUT STILL, HER MIND AND BODY ARE BOTH EXTREMELY UNSTABLE..... SHE MAY YET BE CAPABLE OF CURSING THOSE WHO APPROACH.
AS A GENERAL RULE, CORPSE PRINCESSES WHO DEVELOP CURSES ARE CONTAINED WITHIN FOR SEVEN FULL DAYS .....
...AND IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOU, GON-SOUJOU .....
BUT ...


DRIFT
DRIFT
DRIFT
DRIFT
RIKA.
LOOK.

BUT HOW.....! GHOSTS SHOULDN'T BE APPEARING NEAR THE PURIFICATION CHAMBER.....!
IS THAT..... A GHOST .....!?
..... WHAT'S THAT?

AH!
SAKI !!
LET'S GO IN AND CHECK IT OUT.
THD
NO WAY TO KNOW STANDING UP HERE.
WHAT ON EARTH .....
...IS HAP-PENING INSIDE .....?

!!
FWOOM
CREAK
DID THE LOSS OF BROTHER TA— OF HER CONTRACTING MONK...
...REALLY TAKE SUCH A TOLL ON MAKINA-CHAN'S SPIRIT?
THIS AIR..... SO OPPRESSIVE !!
I'VE GOT GOOSE BUMPS .....
...!
THIS IS...
WHOOSH
UWAHH .....
CRAWL
CRAWL
CRAWL
CRAWL
!!
...
THIS... THIS IS TERRIBLE ...!
GON-SOUJOU .....! PLEASE STEP BACK ...!

CRAWL
CRAWL
CRAWL
CRAWL
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
EEEK!!
GHOSTS .....
SO MANY ...
..... RIKA ...
... SAN ...?
NO .....

CRAWL
CRAWL
CRAWL
STAY .....
... BACK.
CRAWL
NO ...
SHE LOOKS DEBILITATED... BUT WHY .....?
MAKINA-CHAN .....!
THAT MIST .....
THEY'RE EATING SOMETHING ...?
.....
GRAB
!!
GAPE
... THAT MAKINA-CHAN IS EMITTING?
THE GHOSTS HAVE ALL GATHERED TO CONSUME THAT MIST...

!!
SAKI
!!
RIGHT!
STEP
SPLASH
SPLASH
!!
WHACK
WHACK
WHACK
WHAM
.....

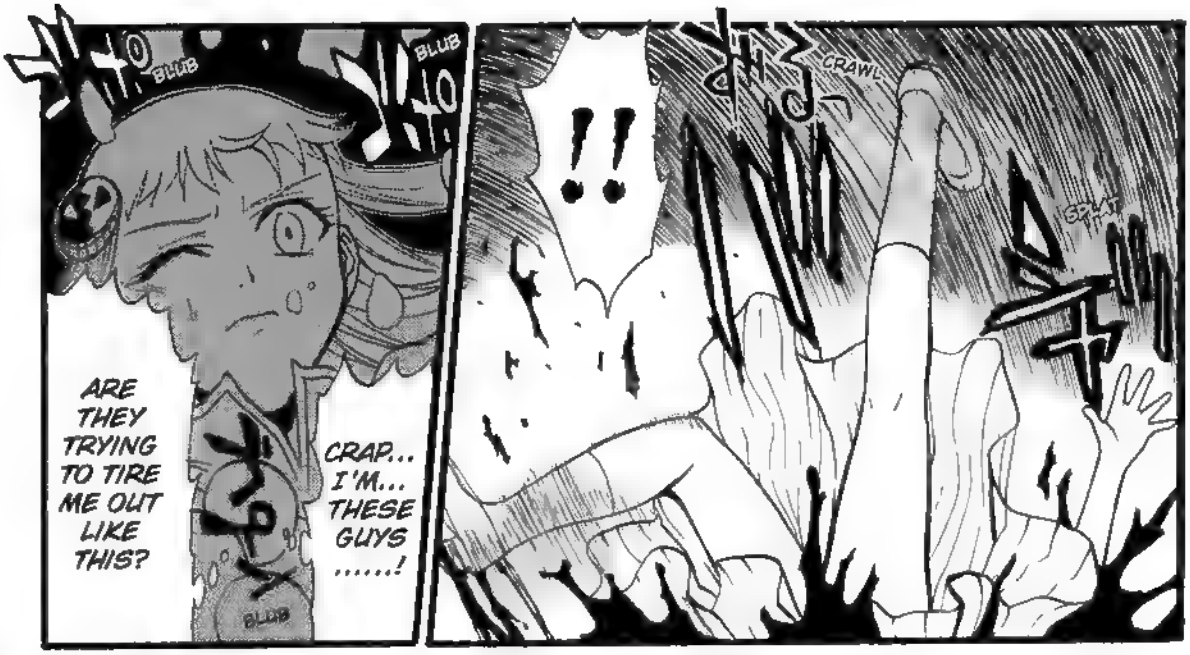
THEY'RE ATTACKING?
IMPOSSIBLE.....! GHOSTS ARE INCORPOREAL SPIRITS... LIKE SHIKABANE, BUT WITHOUT BODIES .....
THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH THE PHYSICAL WORLD .....
!
CRACK
RIP
SINK
!
...
BLOOD
IS IT THE MIST ...?
IS THAT WHAT'S GIVING THE GHOSTS THEIR POWER?
I'VE HEARD THAT THIS INK IS PURIFIED, SO IT WEAKENS CORPSE PRINCESSES' POWERS .....
OH BOY ...
THIS ISN'T EASY .....
LIKE I'VE GOT LEAD SINKERS ATTACHED, OR LIKE I'M WALKING THROUGH COAL TAR.....
MY FEET FEEL HEAVY. .....

SLASH
.....
SINK
SLOSH
SLOSH
SLOSH
SLOSH
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
!!
SLASH
CRAWL
CRAWL
GON-SOUJOU-SAMA! PLEASE COME BACK!!
TURN
SAK!

HUM
SPLAT
FWIP
WHOOSH
AH ...
!?
EH ...?
BURST
TCH
WHAT'S
REACH
AH.
AH.
AH.
TUG
SPLAT
KYAHH!!
RISE

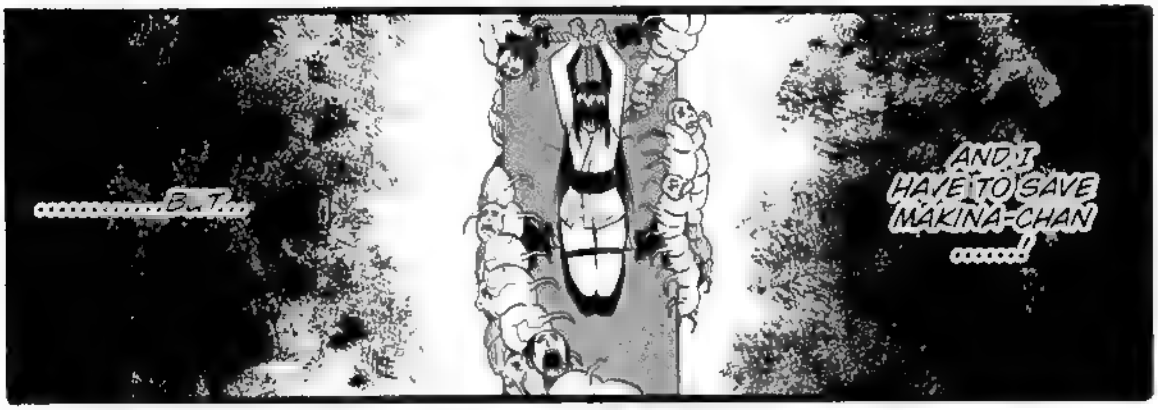
FWAP
SHUK

HAA.
KOFF...
.....
HAA.


BLUB
BLUB
ARE THEY TRYING TO TIRE ME OUT LIKE THIS?
BLUB
CRAP... I'M... THESE GUYS .....!
!!
CRAWL
SPLAT

SLICE
SLASH
.....!!

I HAVE TO GET HER BACK HERE.....
AND SHE'S IN REAL DANGER NOW .....!
THIS IS BAD ...
THIS POOL OF INK ISN'T SOMETHING SAKI CAN CROSS.....


.....B...T...
AND I HAVE TO SAVE MAKINA-CHAN .....!

NO.
...THERE'S NO GUARANTEE I CAN GET ACROSS SAFELY .....
BLUB

!?
WHOOSH
I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE .....!

ZOOM
FWOOM
HOLD ON .....
IT'S DANGE—
WHA—
!?

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
CRACK
STILL
FWIP
AMAZING .....!!
!
BLUB...
BLUB...
FLIK
BOOM

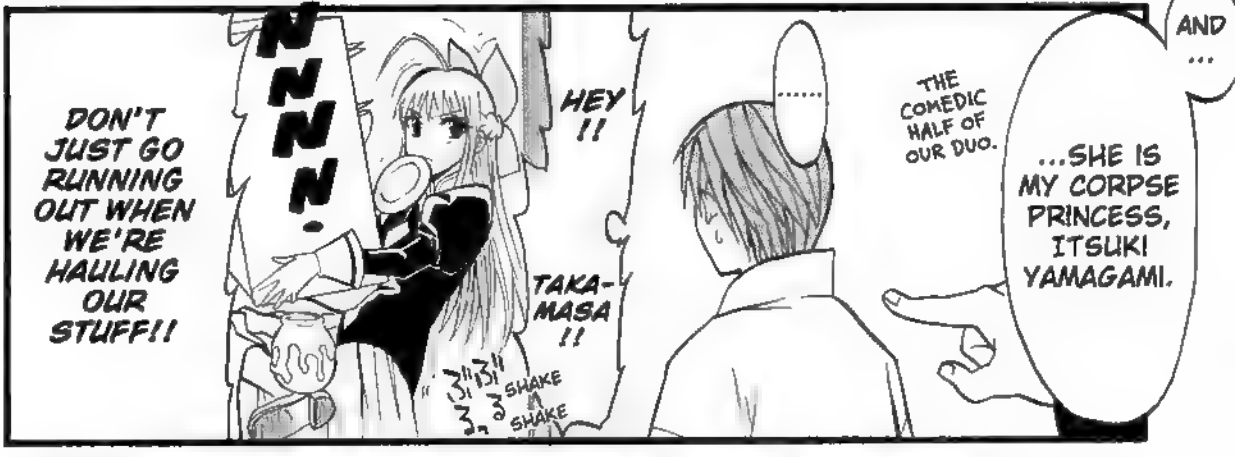
OM
ARORIKYA
...
...
SVAHA.
TAP
FWOOM

EH ...?
...
WHAT?
WHAT HAPPENED?
WHOOSH

.....
PLUCK
JUST NOW ...
IF LEFT ALONE, THEY WOULD HAVE CONTINUED EATING HER AURA AND LINGERING REGRETS. SHE WOULD HAVE TRULY PASSED FROM THIS WORLD.
SIZZLE
SIZZLE
IT'S PART OF A RARE PHENOMENON CALLED "RE-DEATH," WHEN A CORPSE PRINCESS HAS LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT.
EARLIER..... THAT "MIST" COMING OFF HER WAS HER "AURA"..... HER VERY LIFE ENERGY.

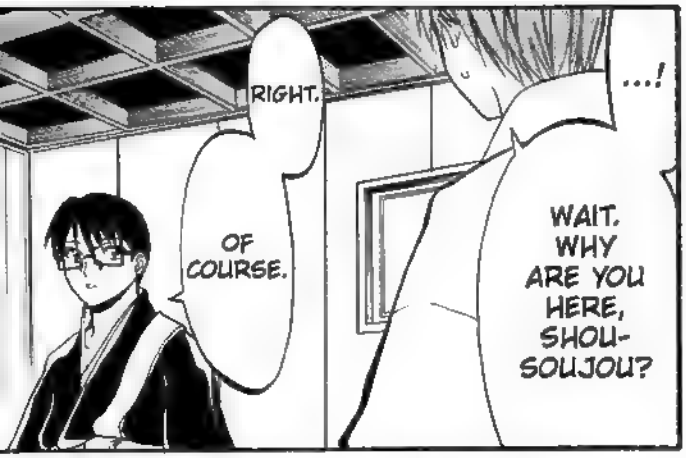
I FORCIBLY RESTARTED THE PRODUCTION OF AURA IN HER BODY, STOPPED THE LEAK OF ENERGY, AND BLEW AWAY THE GHOSTS.
...I BORROWED THE POWER OF KANNON, GUARDIAN BODHISATTVA OF MERCY AND SALVATION.

THAT'S BROTHER TAGAMI'S ……
BADUM
I'VE JUST BEEN APPOINTED THE NEW PROTECTOR OF IKAI AND YANATSU'S DISTRICT.
MY NAME IS TAKAMASA SOUGI.
PARDON MY RUDNESS, ARAGAMI GON-SOUJOU.
YES.
……!
YOU'RE …… UME-HARA SOU-JOU'S ……

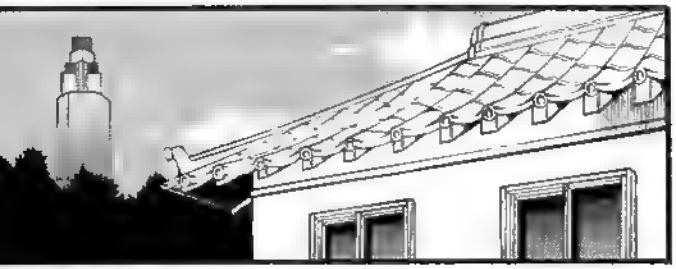

DON'T JUST GO RUNNING OUT WHEN WE'RE HAULING OUR STUFF!!
NNN-
HEY !!
TAKA-MASA !!
SHAKE SHAKE
……
THE COMEDIC HALF OF OUR DUO.
AND …
…SHE IS MY CORPSE PRINCESS, ITSUKI YAMAGAMI.

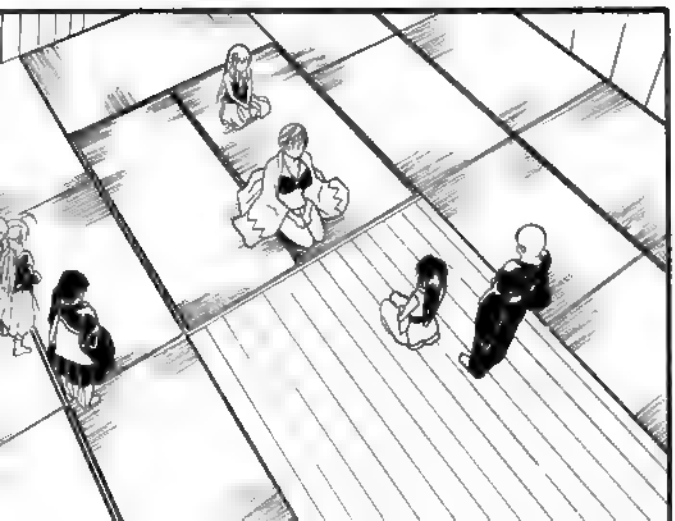
EVEN WITH ALL MY BATTLE EXPERIENCE, I FOUND MYSELF HESITATING. MEANWHILE, HE RAN INTO THAT POOL FULL OF GHOSTS WITHOUT SECOND THOUGHT ……
IF HE HADN'T COME, WE WOULD'VE LOST MAKINA-CHAN ……
SERIOUSLY ……
NO.
YOU SAVED THE DAY.
MY BODY MOVED INSTINC-TIVELY ……
SORRY…
I APOLOGIZE FOR OVERSTEP-PING MY BOUNDS, GON-SOUJOU.

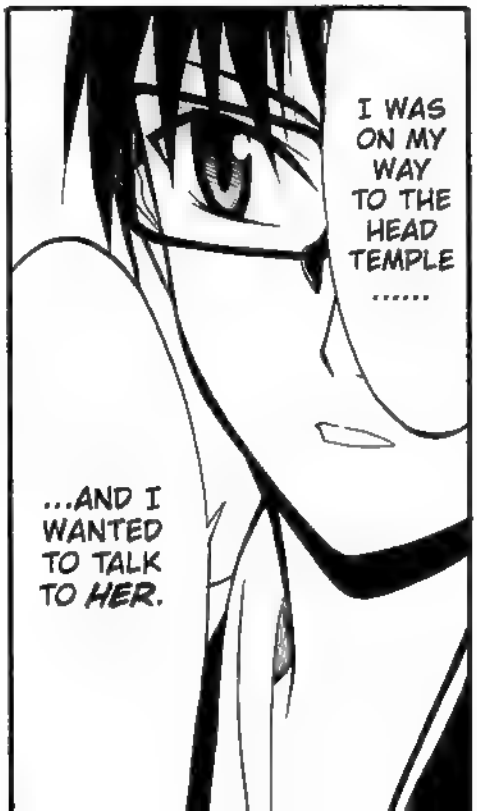
EVEN THOUGH HE'S NOT AN UNDEAD CORPSE PRINCESS, HE KEEPS HIMSELF FROM FLINCHING IN THE FACE OF DREAD .....
THAT'S PROOF OF HOW INCREDIBLY DISCIPLINED HE IS.....
THAT'S TRUE STRENGTH .....

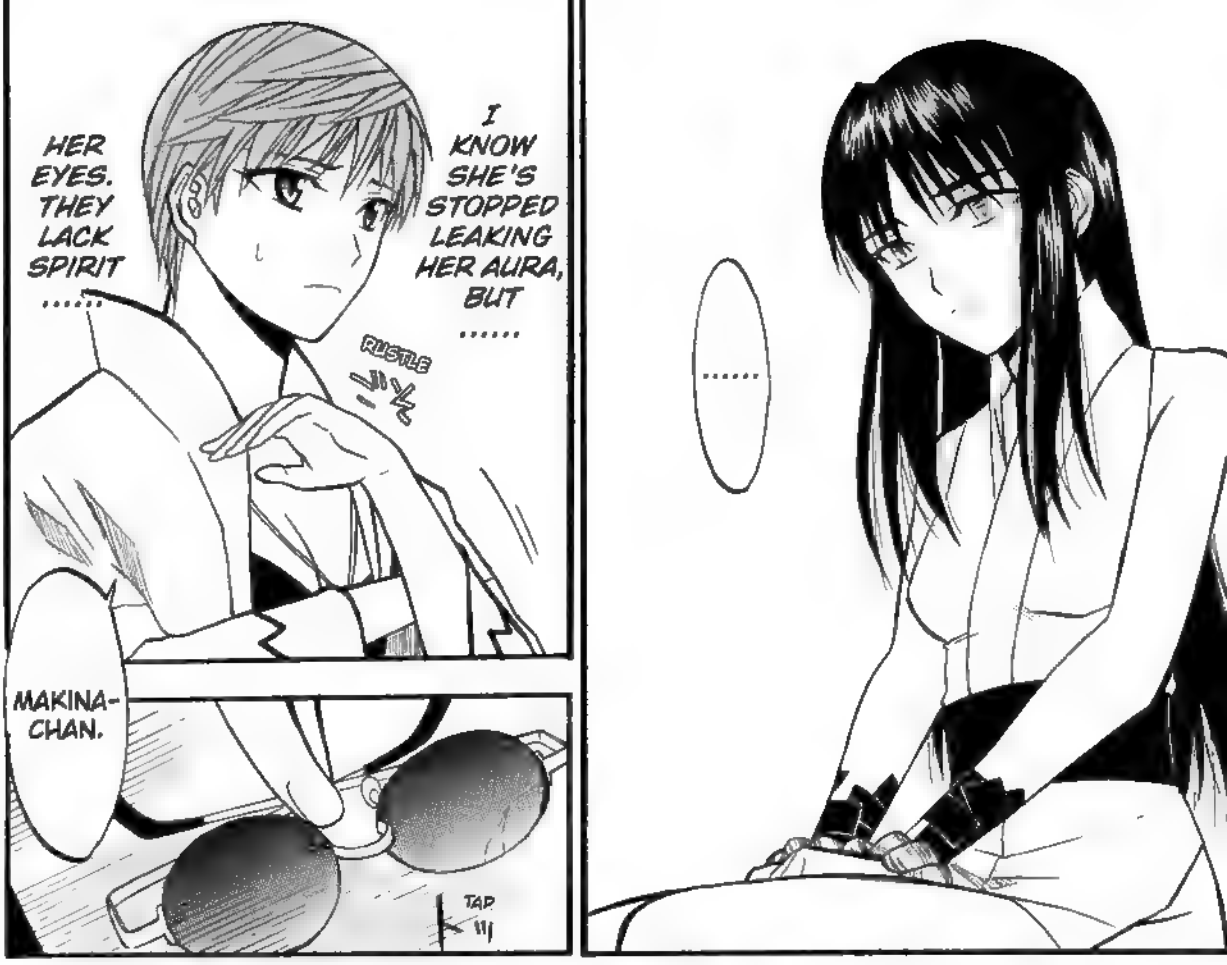

...!
WAIT. WHY ARE YOU HERE, SHOU-SOUJOU?
RIGHT.
OF COURSE.

...A "GENPAKU" .....!
THIS IS .....






I WAS ON MY WAY TO THE HEAD TEMPLE .....
...AND I WANTED TO TALK TO HER.


HER EYES. THEY LACK SPIRIT .....
I KNOW SHE'S STOPPED LEAKING HER AURA, BUT .....
RUSTLE
MAKINA-CHAN.
TAP
.....

BROTH-ER TAGA-MI'S.
I WANTED YOU TO HAVE THEM.
I..... RECEIVED THESE AT THE FUNERAL.

RIGHT... THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY .....
GON-SOU-JOU.
IT DOESN'T APPEAR SHE'S QUITE CAPABLE OF RESPONDING YET.....
.....
.....
THANK YOU..... VERY MUCH.

.....
...
WHAT A SHAME.
I HAD HIGH HOPES FOR YOU .....
.....
BECAUSE WHEN A CON-TRACTING MONK PASSES ...
...HIS OR HER CORPSE PRINCESS IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PROVE THAT THE LIFE WAS NOT LOST IN VAIN.
TAKA-MASA... THAT'S A LITTLE HARSH ...
I HEARD SOME-THING INTER-ESTING.
SOME-THING..... YOU OUGHT TO KNOW.
THE BOY FROM THE ORPHANAGE WHO INHERITED YOUR CONTRACT .....
HE CLAIMS THAT HE WANTS TO FOLLOW IN TAGAMI SHOU-SOUJOU'S FOOTSTEPS AS YOUR CONTRACTING MONK.
THOUGH HE WAS TURNED DOWN.

PROVE TO US ALL...
...THAT YOUR CON-TRACTING MONK FOUGHT FOR A REASON.
HOWEVER HE CHOOSES TO CARRY ON...
..... DO YOU INTEND TO MOPE AROUND FOREVER?

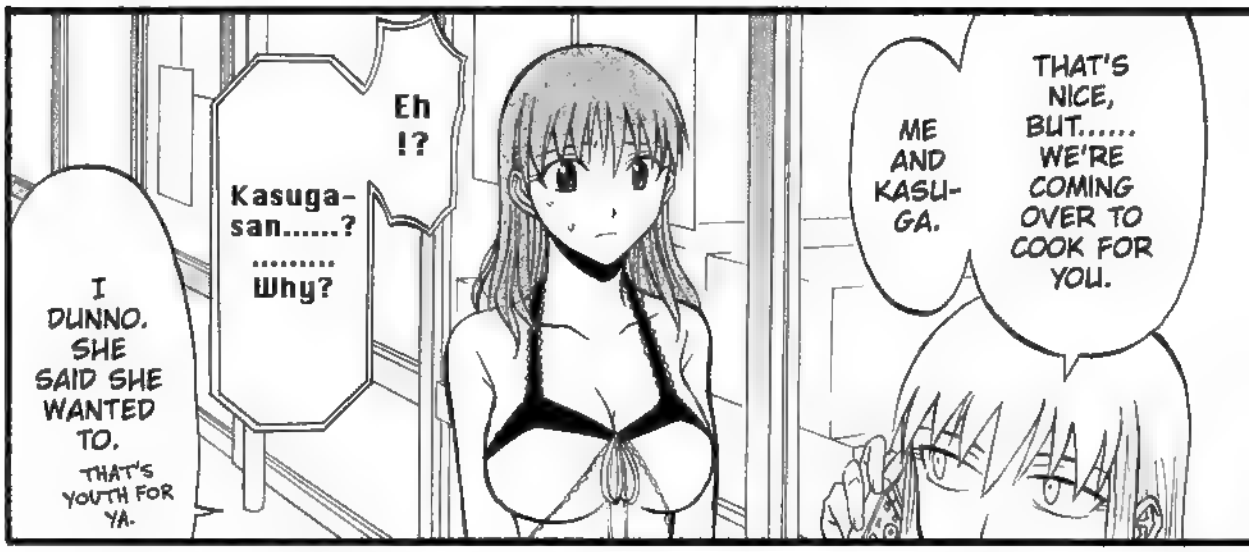
I'LL WEL-COME YOU...
...WITH OPEN ARMS.
IN THE EVENT .....
...THAT YOU FEEL LIKE PICKING UP YOUR GUNS AGAIN, COME AND SEE ME.

HAA.
I CAN HEAR IT.....
A VOICE.
HAAA.
HAA.
...
...
...THAT CAT'S VOICE .....
NOT SURE FROM WHERE, BUT ...
HAA.
HAA.
MEOWWW
THAT'S .....
MEOWW
NO, BIG BRO...
MEOW
HOLD ON, BIG BRO !!
HAA.
WAIT!
BIG BRO !!
GRAB

!?
EH?
IT'S ME?
BLUB
BLUB
BLUB
.....HHH...
JOLT
UWAAHHH!!!

RING
...
HAA
HAA
RING
.....
HAA...
RING
...
Incoming Call
INUHIKO
RING
...
BEEP.
.....
HELLO.
AH!
NICE OF YOU TO PICK UP!
I MEAN, WHAT'S BEEN UP WITH YOU !?
IT'S BEEN FIVE DAYS SINCE YOU CAME TO SCHOOL.
YEAH
.....
SORRY
.....

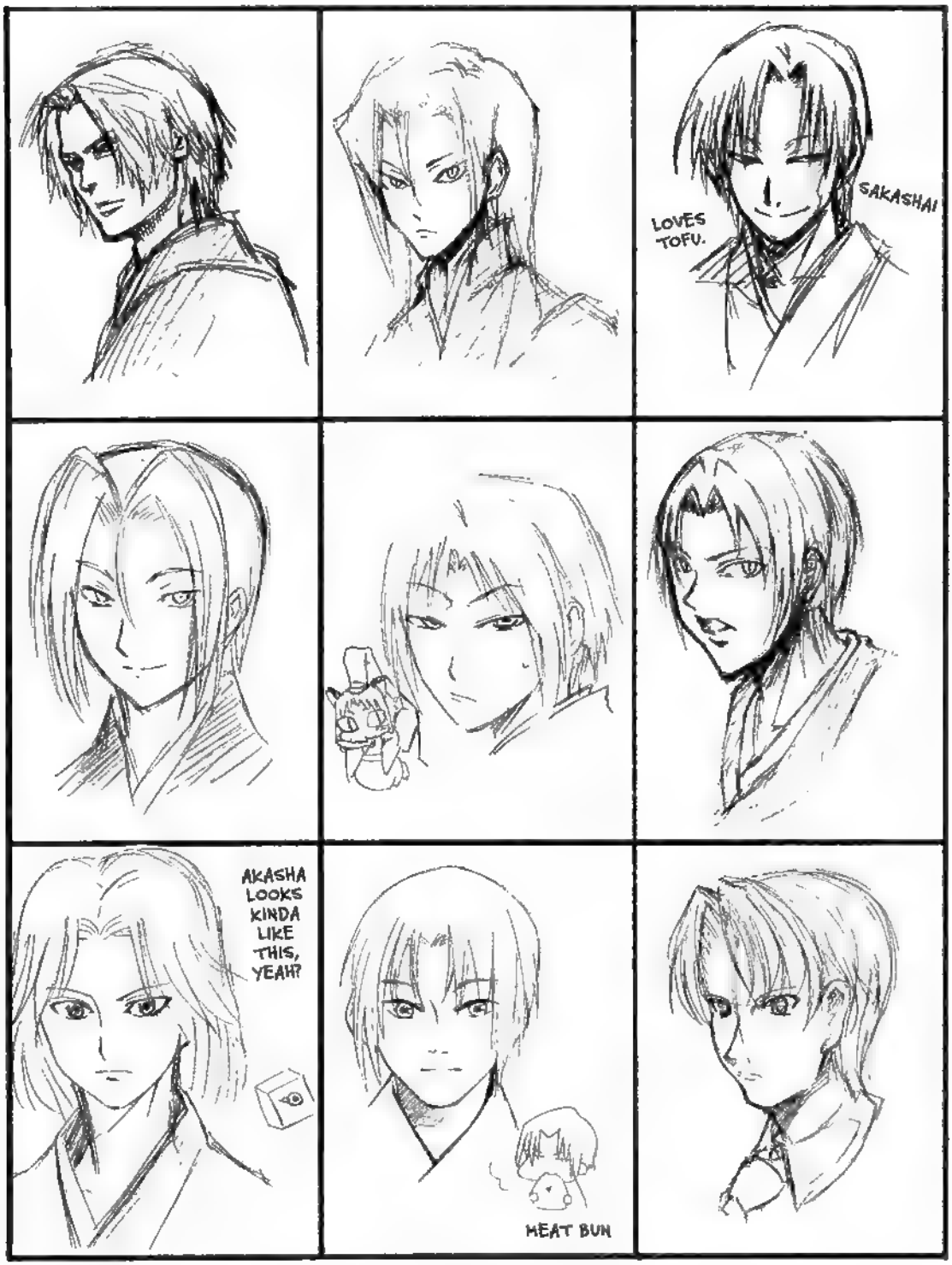
.....
I'M STILL ALIVE.
..... I'M OKAY.
THIS IS YOU WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, SO...
...WE'RE ALL WORRIED YOU'RE DEPRESSED AS HELL AND STARVING YOURSELF!
.....I HEARD... ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.
WAVE


I DUNNO. SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO.
THAT'S YOUTH FOR YA.
Kasuga-san.....? ..... Why?
Eh !?
ME AND KASU-GA.
THAT'S NICE, BUT..... WE'RE COMING OVER TO COOK FOR YOU.

We'll just be a min—
Don't worry. We're at a super-market nearby.
FINE. WHERE SHOULD I COME MEET YOU GUYS?
...
SMASH
CRASH
Stop putting words in my mouth !!
I NEVER SAID THAT!!
TWITCH
.....HMM? NO WAY, OURI. I KNOW SHE'S CUTE AND ALL, BUT YOU CAN'T ASK A GIRL TO LET YOU DO THAT TO HER MASSIVE KNOCKERS.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW YOUR LIMITS, Y'KNOW?

Bzz ...
Bzz ...
.....
INU-HIKO ?
WHAT THE—?
SLAM
RUSH
NO !!
...!!
STAND
RINNNNG
Incoming Call OUR!
RING
RING
RING RING

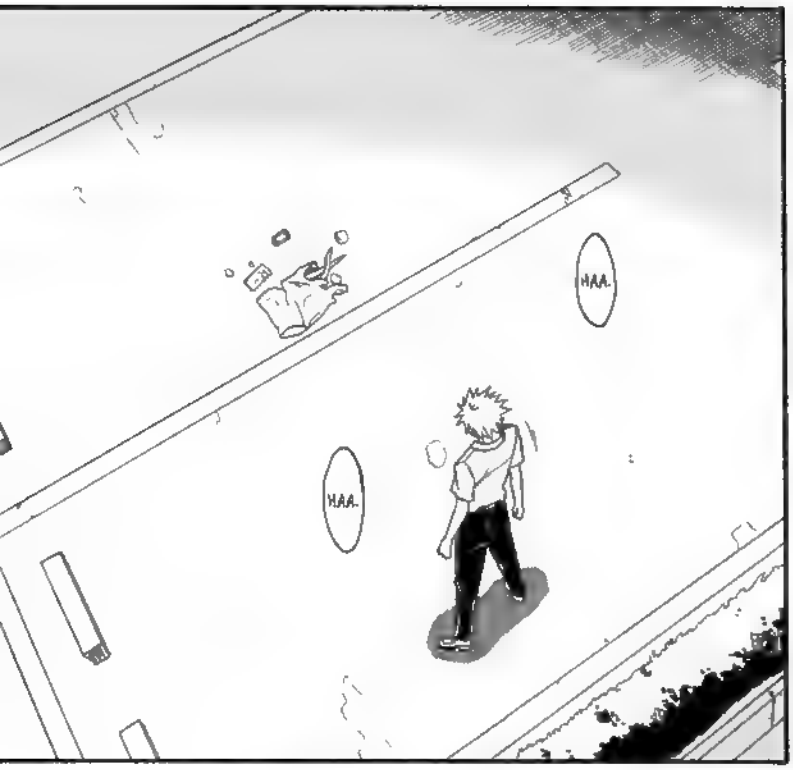
AS USUAL!!!
SKETCH-FROM-MEMORY KINGDOM CHAMPIONSHIP!! (AKASHA EDITION)



EVEN MY HELPERS PARTICIPATED IN THIS ONE.

THANKS, EVERYONE!

DEATH 18: DUAL HAPPENINGS (PART 1)



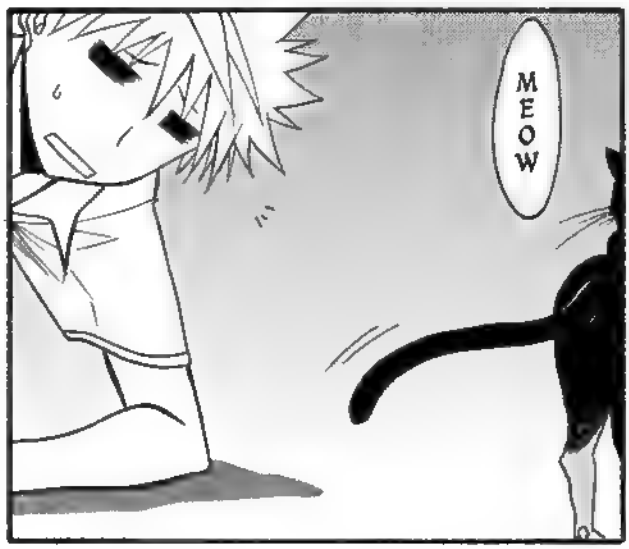
HOW DO I SAVE THEM ...?
SQUEEZE

A SHIKABANE !!

AS WE WERE TALKING, SOMETHING ATTACKED THEM AND TOOK THEM AWAY BEFORE THEY COULD EVEN SCREAM.
NOT POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN .....
..... IF SO, WHAT DO I DO?

NEVER GOT SHIRAE'S NUMBER
.....
BAH.
I'LL GET AHOLD OF SHIRAE-SAN AND...

!
RIGHT... I'LL MAKE A CALL!
FLIP


MEOW

..... WHY DIDN'T HE TELL ME THOUGH .....?
IF ONLY I'D ASKED HIM BACK WHEN WE MET .....
GUESS HE DIDN'T LIKE ME VERY MUCH...
GLOOM

MEOW
IT'S THAT CAT AGAIN.....
THAT CAT .....
JUST WHAT..... ARE YOU ?
MEOW
..... YOU.
MEOW
.....
WHAT ?
DO YOU..... WANT ME TO FOLLOW YOU?
TURN

IS THIS REALLY OKAY, TAKA-MASA?
DRAGGING HER OUT OF THE PU-RIFICATION CHAMBER LIKE THIS .....
.....
IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

SHIRAE-SAN IS SEARCHING FOR THE ENEMY, AND HIS REGULAR UPDATES STOPPED COMING.
I THINK SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HIS TEAM.
!
ZIP

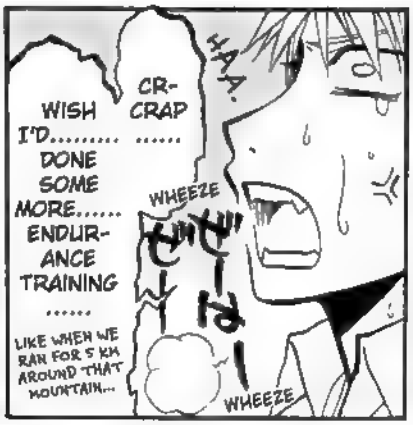
I KNOW IT'S A LITTLE SUDDEN FOR HER...
...BUT WE NEED ALL THE FIGHTERS WE CAN GET.

BY FIGHT-ING...
...SHE MIGHT RECALL WHAT IT IS THAT MATTERS .....
?
.....
ALSO ...

DEATH 18: DUAL HAPPENINGS (PART 1)

診療科
内科
SS 26

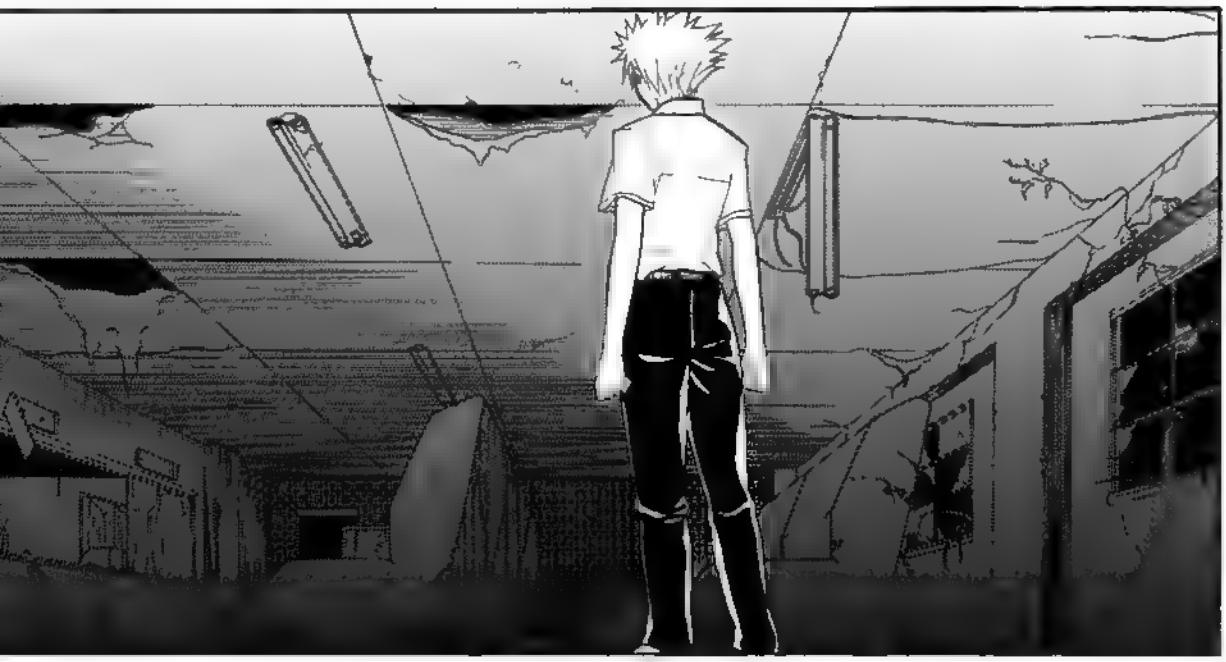
.....
HAA...
A TREAT-MENT WARD?
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
診療科


HAA.
CR-CRAP
WISH I'D..... .....
DONE SOME MORE..... ENDUR-ANCE TRAINING .....
LIKE WHEN WE RAN FOR 5 KM AROUND THAT MOUNTAIN...
WHEEZE
ぜーはー
WHEEZE

TMP
HAA.
HAA.

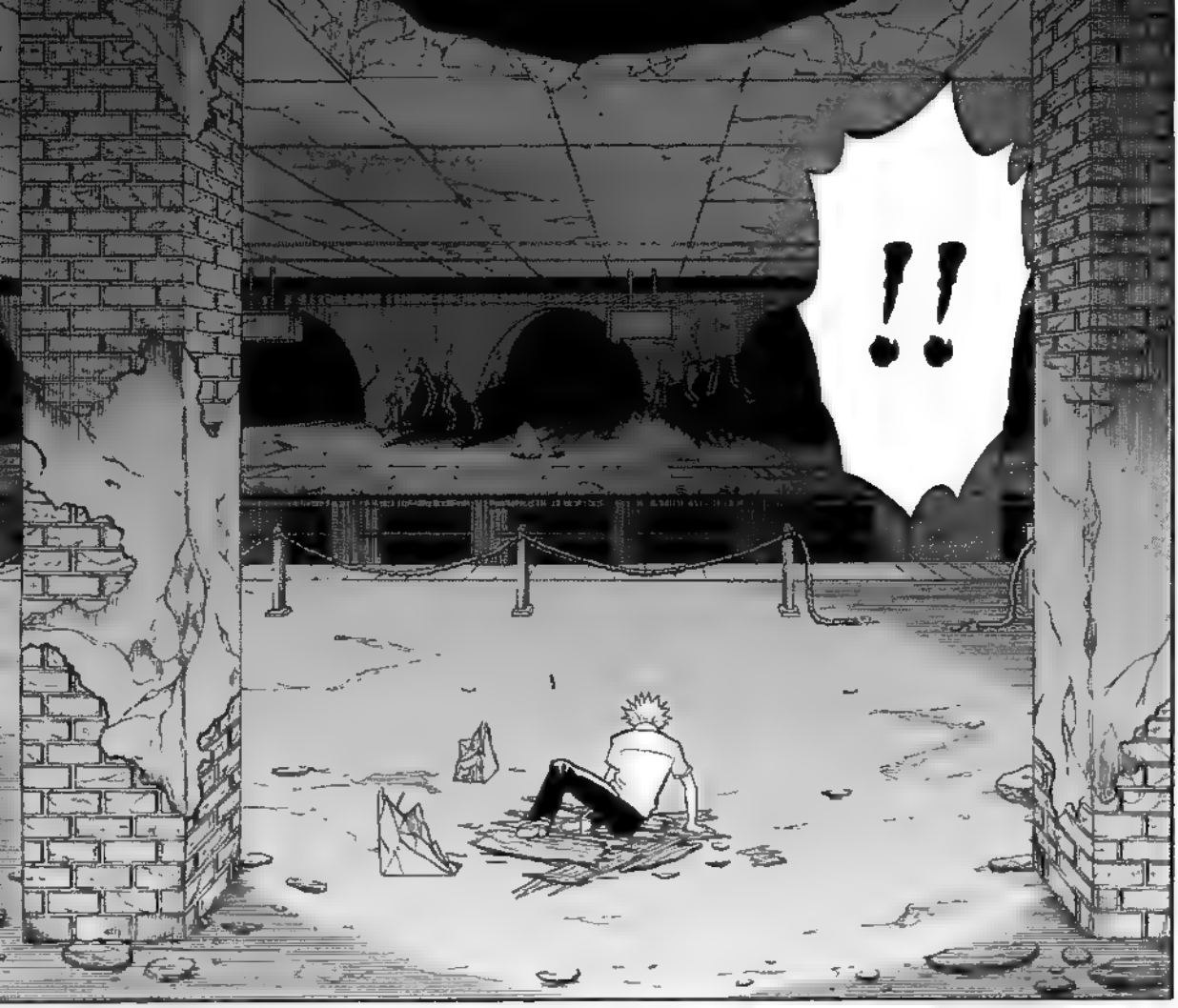
.....
!?
!!
STEP

SLIDE
SLIDE
.....
ARE THEY HERE .....?
HERE .....?
THE CAT'S... GONE .....
.....THAT MEANS...



IF I'M RIGHT ABOUT THIS..... THEN I'VE GOTTA KEEP GOING .....
IF THAT'S THE CASE .....
CREAK
...AS THAT NIGHT .....
BACK OF MY NECK'S TINGLING..... IT'S THE SAME..... FEELING .....
CLICK
GULP

NOT JUST 'COS IT'S A CREEPY ABANDONED HOSPITAL. I CAN FEEL SOMETHING ELSE IN THE AIR.
.....
SOMETHING UNCANNY ABOUT THIS PLACE
.....
CREAK
CREAK
JUST HAVE TO BE CAUTIOUS AND—
CRACK
!
CRAP..... DON'T CHICKEN OUT NOW
...
OF COURSE—
JUST AS I SAY
THAAAAAT.
AHHH.
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH
.....
OUCH.
CRUMBLE
.....
HUH?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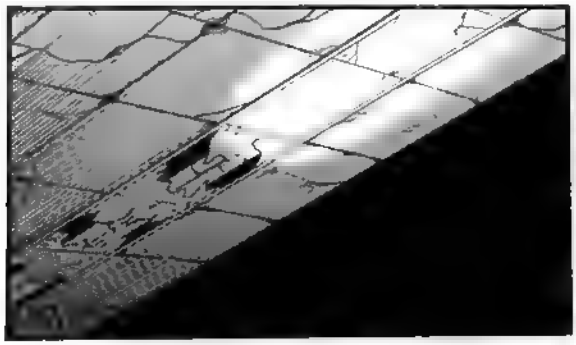
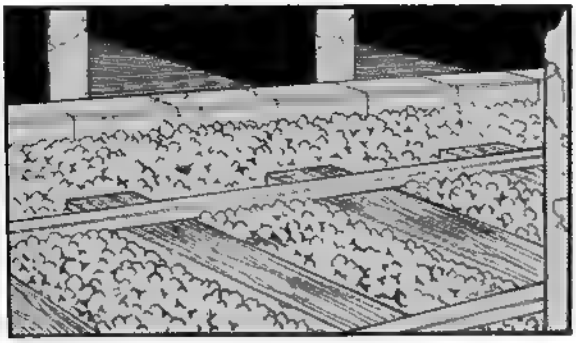


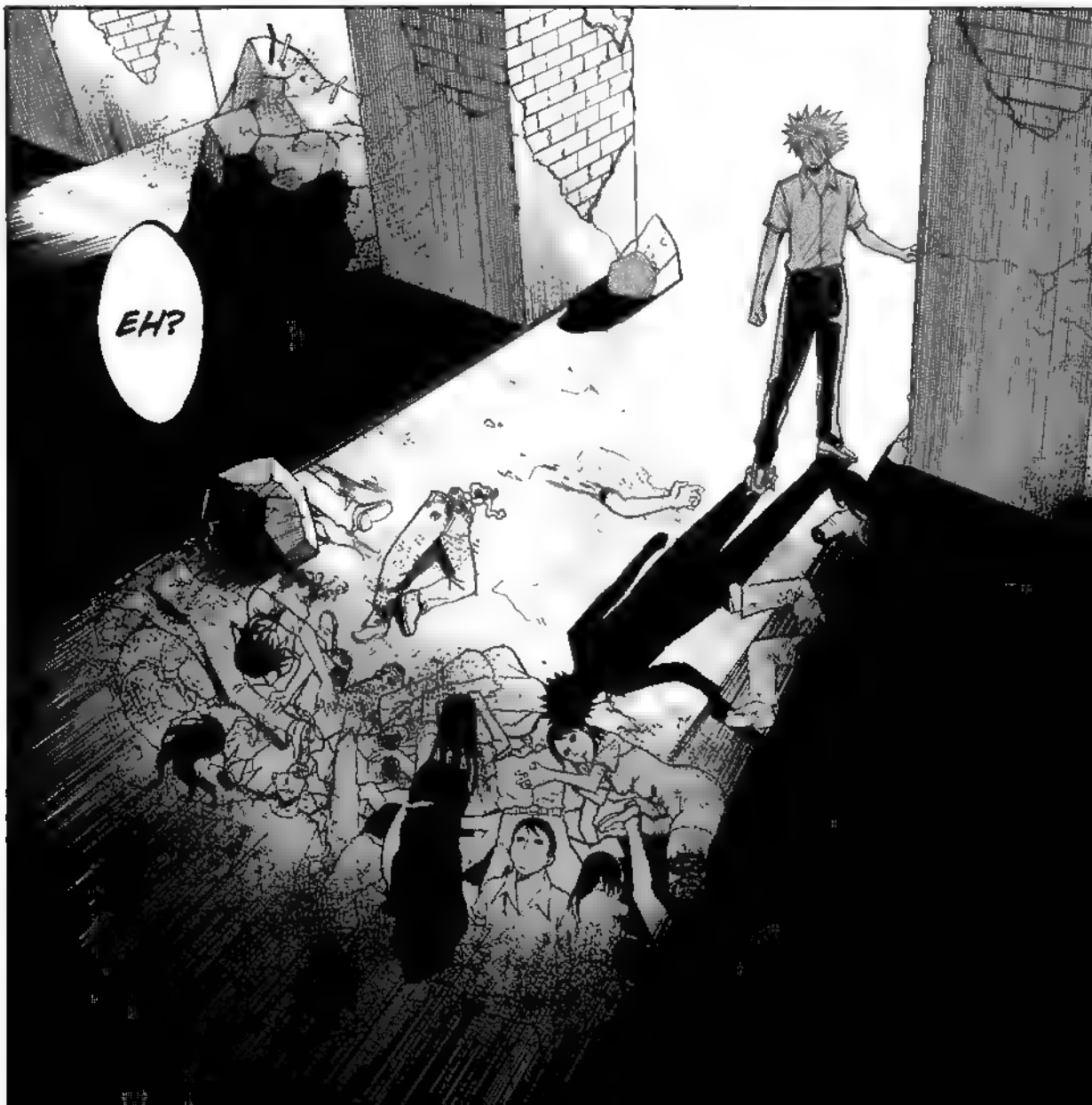


WHO KNEW THERE WERE TRACKS.....
...UNDERNEATH THE CITY?

...THE SEWERS .....? NO.
A WHOLE... SUBWAY SYSTEM?
WHAT'S ..... THIS?
IS IT.....

SQUISH
WHERE'D MY FLASH-LIGHT GO...
CRAP... SURE IS DARK .....
NO... HAVE TO FOCUS ON FINDING THEM .....

..... HMM.
JUST STEPPED ON SOMETHING SOFT.....
WHAT ..... THE ?


EH?

.....
SLUMP
...UGH!
BODIES!!
GUH
.....URGH
...
GULP
A MOUNTAIN...
OF BODIES!!
SLAP

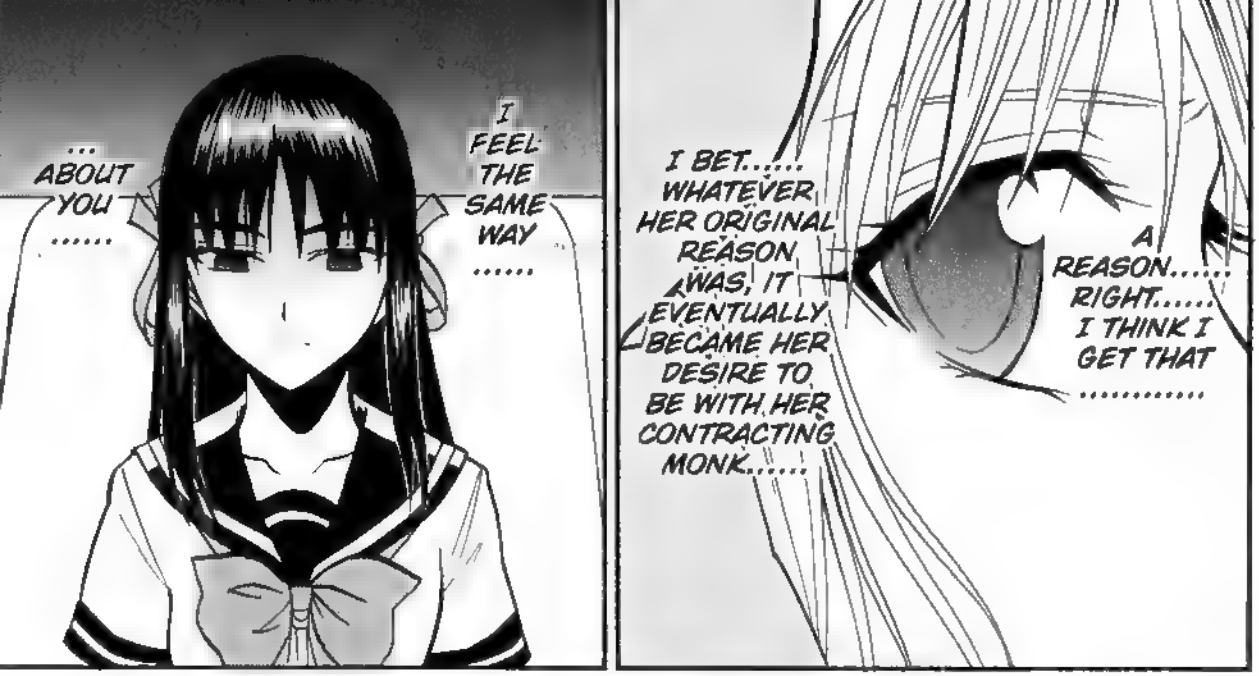
YOU CAME HERE TO KEEP THIS FROM HAPPENING TO THOSE TWO.....!!
STAY CALM.....!! YOU THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING LIKE THIS, RIGHT.....!?

CRAP
.....

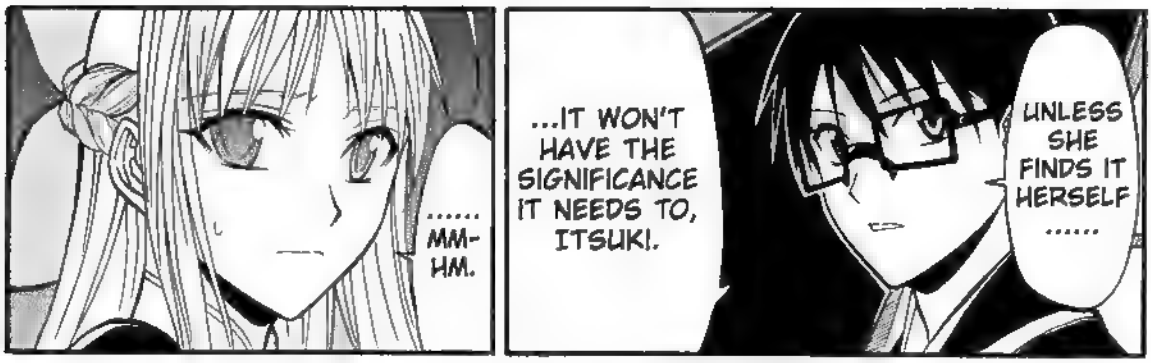
.....
WHAT'S..... HEAVEN?
HEY..... KEISEI.
HEAVEN ?
YEAH. I MEAN, IT'S NOT THAT I REALLY CARE.
BUT THE OTHER CORPSE PRINCESSES FIGHT IN ORDER TO GET TO HEAVEN, RIGHT?
MM— HM ...
I GUESS THAT'S TRUE.....
BOX: TAKOYAKI
WELL, STEREO-TYPICALLY, IT'S LIKE .....
MUNCH
MUNCH
A SWEET-SMELLING FIELD OF FLOWERS WHERE NO ONE FIGHTS OR GOES HUNGRY.
HMPH... LIKE AN ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT, ALL-YOU-CAN-DRINK BUFFET .....?
..... THAT'S A CRUDE WAY OF PUTTING IT...

WITH ENLIGHTEN-MENT COMES DIVINE UNDER-STANDING.
A PERSON BECOMES ONE WITH THE WORLD, FREE OF GRIEF AND ANGUISH .....
..... APPAR-ENTLY.
BUT ...
THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT "HEAVEN" MEANS.
BUDDHISM'S HEAVEN IS THE "PURE LAND."
? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "APPAR-ENTLY"?
YOU DON'T KNOW?
SO IT'S A WORLD WITHOUT ANY WORRIES?
IN SO MANY WORDS, YEAH.
BUT THAT EXPLANATION NEVER FELT LIKE ENOUGH TO ME.
NO MATTER HOW "EN-LIGHTENED" YOU GET...
...IF YOU STOP WORRYING ABOUT THE BELOVED FRIENDS AND FAMILY YOU LEFT BEHIND IN THE REAL WORLD...
... WOULDN'T THAT BE A LITTLE LONELY?

RIGHT, I SEE.
.....SHE DOESN'T TALK MUCH .....
MM-HM.
YEAH.
I THINK..... SHE'S STILL SEARCHING FOR A GOOD REASON.....
.....
A REA-SON?
A REASON TO FIGHT..... WHICH MEANS A REASON TO LIVE.
CORPSE PRINCESS-ES ARE MOTIVATED BY THEIR LINGERING REGRETS AND CON-VICTIONS. THOSE GIVE THEM POWER .....
POWER TO LIVE, EVEN.
BUT IN HER CASE..... IT SEEMS THAT SHE LOST HER REASON WHEN HER CONTRACTING MONK PASSED .....
..... SO NOW SHE NEEDS A NEW ONE.
.....


... ABOUT YOU .....
I FEEL THE SAME WAY .....
I BET..... WHATEVER HER ORIGINAL REASON WAS, IT EVENTUALLY BECAME HER DESIRE TO BE WITH HER CONTRACTING MONK.....
A REASON..... RIGHT..... I THINK I GET THAT .....

AND THAT WON'T BE SOMETHING WE ALONE CAN CONVINCE HER OF.
...SHE HAS TO DISCOVER A REASON SHE CAN BELIEVE IN.
IF SHE'S EVER TO WIELD HER GUNS AGAIN ...

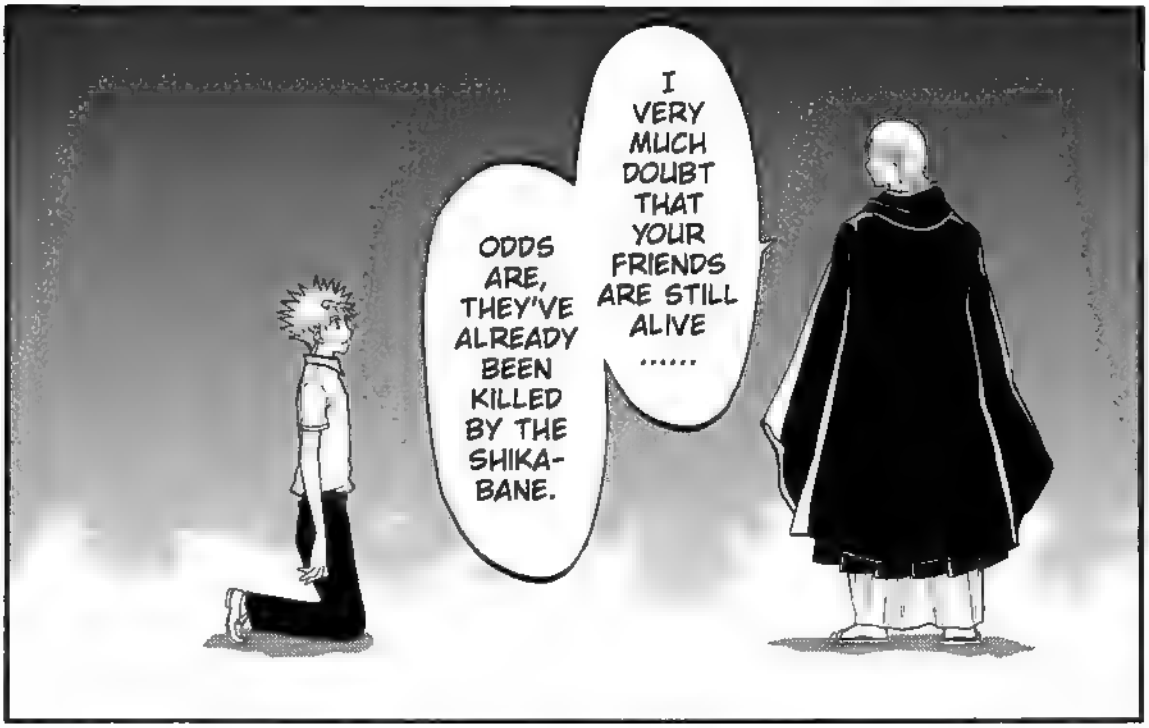

..... MM-HM.
...IT WON'T HAVE THE SIGNIFICANCE IT NEEDS TO, ITSUKI.
UNLESS SHE FINDS IT HERSELF .....

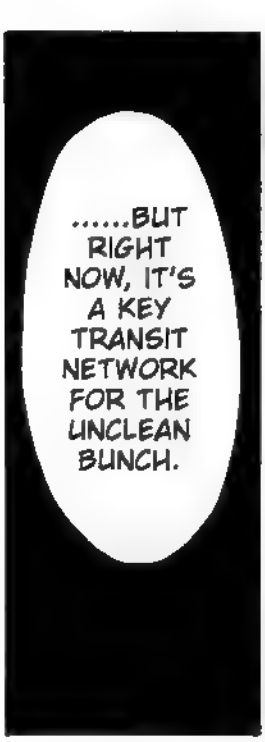
GET READY TO—
ANYWAY... WE'RE NEARLY THERE.

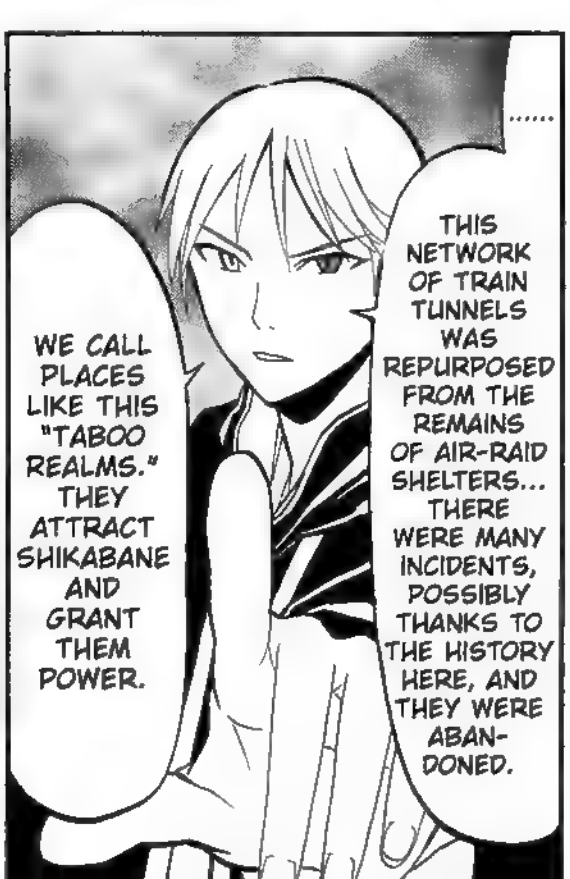
SHINE
A PERSON!?
!!
FLIK
SLASH
BOOM

.....
NN...
.....
UNBE-
LIEV-
ABLE
...
TO
THINK
WE'D
FIND
YOU
DOWN
HERE
.....
!
KEEP
QUIET.
I THINK
THAT.....
TWO OF MY
FRIENDS WERE
ATTACKED BY
SHIKABANE
.....
.....SO
I WOUND
UP HERE,
LOOKING
FOR
THEM...
BUT...
UMM
.....
...
I'M
SORRY
.....
...I
THOUGHT
I TOLD YOU
OUTSIDERS
SHOULDN'T
BUTT
IN.....
OURI
KAGAMI-
KUN.
WHOOSH
I
DON'T
KNOW
HOW YOU
FOUND
THIS
PLACE,
BUT...

EH?
...A PITY.
BY SHIKA-BANE ?
..... THAT'S ...


I VERY MUCH DOUBT THAT YOUR FRIENDS ARE STILL ALIVE .....
ODDS ARE, THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN KILLED BY THE SHIKA-BANE.


.....BUT RIGHT NOW, IT'S A KEY TRANSIT NETWORK FOR THE UNCLEAN BUNCH.


.....
THIS NETWORK OF TRAIN TUNNELS WAS REPURPOSED FROM THE REMAINS OF AIR-RAID SHELTERS... THERE WERE MANY INCIDENTS, POSSIBLY THANKS TO THE HISTORY HERE, AND THEY WERE ABAN-DONED.
WE CALL PLACES LIKE THIS "TABOO REALMS." THEY ATTRACT SHIKABANE AND GRANT THEM POWER.

!!
BUT ...
FLIK

UN-CLEAN BUNCH .....?
IT'S CURRENTLY THE LARGEST SHIKABANE SWARM IN JAPAN.
IN ORDER TO MAKE THESE TUNNELS A BETTER TABOO REALM FOR THEMSELVES, THEY'VE BEEN ATTACKING PEOPLE AND SPILLING BLOOD HERE.
.....
YOUR FRIENDS MAY HAVE BEEN SOME OF THOSE VICTIMS .....
.....
THAT'S WHY...
IF WE ARE TO PREVENT ANY MORE DISASTERS .....
...WE OUGHT TO OPERATE ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY'VE BEEN KILLED.
.....
NO .....
IT'S... NOT A SURE THING THAT KASUGA-SAN AND INUHIKO ARE DEAD .....
SO...I CAN'T JUST ACCEPT THAT AND MOVE FORWARD.

FEELING HELPLESS AS PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT ARE TAKEN FROM ME...
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THAT!!

THUD
CLAK
!
THERE'S NO CONVINCING YOU.
.....

I'M SORRY .....
AH ...
OKAY .....

GRAB
SORRY? THEN PERHAPS YOU SHOULD'VE ACTED MORE PRUDENTLY FROM THE START .....

IF YOU WON'T LEAVE, I'LL HAVE YOU STAY WITH US UNTIL WE DISCOVER WHAT BECAME OF YOUR FRIENDS.
EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT A MONK OF THE KOUGON SECT...
...WE STILL DON'T WANT A CORPSE PRINCESS'S CONTRACT HOLDER DYING A MEANINGLESS DEATH.

!
DROOL
!!!
BROTHER HAMAGUCHI .....?
WHAT IS IT?
MUTTER
MUTTER !!
CRAWL
CRAWL
!?
CRAWL
BLURGH

!!
BURST
SWARM
INSECTS ?
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
A SHIKA-BANE'S !?

SWARM
TCH .....
UWAHH!!
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
KACHAK
CHAK
THIS IS...
KACHAK
!?
DON'T FIRE!!
LUNGE
!?
SHUDDER

SPLURT
GUH ..... AH ...
GYAHH!!
BABOOM
CRACK
THE BARREL WAS ALREADY FULL OF INSECTS .....!?
HIS WEAPON EXPLODED ....!
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
GAH
WRAP
BLOODSUCKING LEECHES.....!?
BROTH-ER HASHI-NUMA !!
LUNGE
UWAHHHH.
SUPPER
SUPPER
SUPPER
SUPPER
UWAHH...

...!
THUD
SUCK
SUCK
KAHH.
...
SUCK
AH.
AH.
SUCK
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
WHIRL
ALL THESE INSECTS, EVEN ...!!
IT'S A SHIKA-BANE !!
RETREAT, BROTHER HARA-NISHI!
UGH... AH.

STEP
CORRECT.
HOWEVER ...
YOUR KNOWING OR NOT DOESN'T MATTER.
BZZZ
BZZZ
YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF.
..... KU KU.
!?
THEY'RE..... FROM A SHIKABANE!?
THESE BUGS.....

THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN ENTER HERE ARE US OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH AND CORPSES.
BECAUSE YOU WILL ALL DIE.
WHOOSH

NO WAY .....
THE SEVEN STARS ?
THE BIG DIPPER PATTERN ..... THIS GUY .....!
...AS I KILL YOU.
WELL.
SINCE YOU'VE COME SO FAR.....I'LL AT LEAST HAVE YOU SCREAM ENOUGH TO MAKE IT WORTH MY WHILE.....

HMPH.
CORRECT AGAIN.
I AM LEADER OF THE SEVEN STARS.
FIRST STAR, HAZAMA.
THIS IS BAD!!
NOW THEN .....
SHALL WE GET STARTED?
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
KOUGON SECT?

ROAR
SQUELCH
.....
DEAD ALREADY ?
ZOOM
BANG
!
KU KU.
CRUMBLE

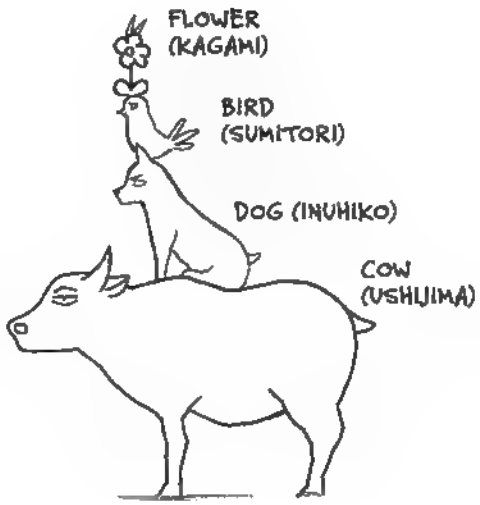
...
I SEE ...
HAA.
CRACK
THE REASON WE COULDN'T CONTACT THOSE ON THE INSIDE ...
STAND
...WAS BECAUSE OF THIS OGRE.
AN ARCHER?
GRIN
PATHETIC.

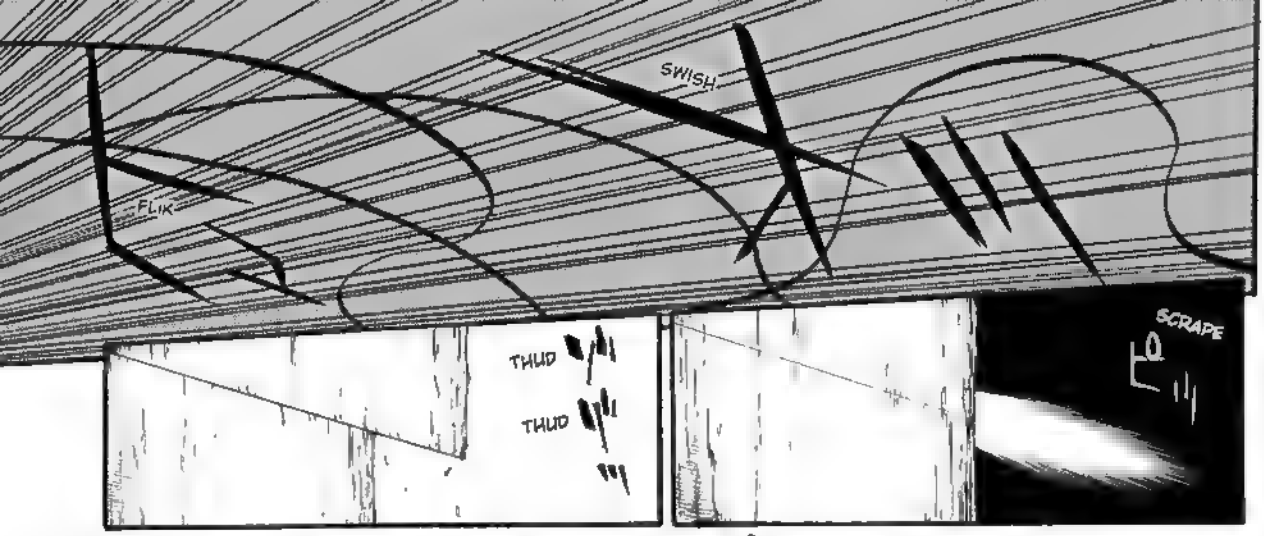
- CORPSE PRINCESS PRODUCTION HELPERS:
  SAKANO-SAN
  OOSUMI-SAN
  YAMAUCHI-SAN
  MARK-TSUAN
  KAWASHITA

- EMERGENCY HELPERS:
  MEGUMI-SAN
  IMAOKA-SAN
  NIJOU-TSUAN
  FUKUDA-SAN

- SUPERVISOR:
  SHIMIZU

AND THANKS TO ALL THE READERS OUT THERE!





DEATH 19: DUAL HAPPENINGS (PART 2)

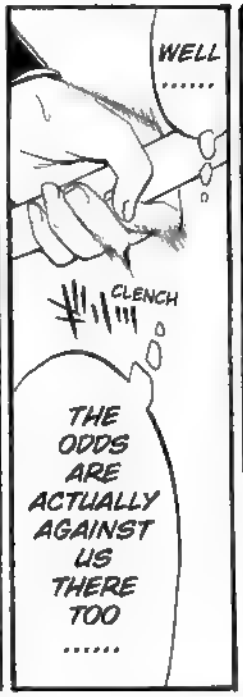
DEFINITELY A TOP-CLASS SHIKABANE, COMPARED TO OTHERS I'VE FOUGHT.....
A BLOOD CURSE..... WITH ENOUGH FORCE THAT IT ONLY TOOK ONE HIT TO FELL THOSE TREES.
.....HE'S STRONG.
.....

DEATH 19:
DUAL
HAPPENINGS
(PART 2)

HOSHI-MURA-SAN.
YES?
...
SORRY, BUT CAN I ASK YOU TO GO ON AHEAD AND SAVE SHIRAE'S GROUP YOURSELF?
WE...
...HAVE TO PUT A STOP TO THIS ONE HERE.

HE'S LIKELY A TOP-RANKED MEMBER OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH.....
EVEN WITH ALL THREE OF US FIGHTING, OUR ODDS OF VICTORY ARE ONLY ABOUT 40%.....
THIS SHIKABANE..... MY ROSARY SHOT HAD NO EFFECT.

.....OUR SECT...
...DOES NOT SEEK DEATH, YET...
...NEITHER DO WE FEAR IT.


WELL.....
CLENCH
THE ODDS ARE ACTUALLY AGAINST US THERE TOO.....

BUT SHOU-SOUJOU.....
IT'S FINE.....
IF WE DON'T TRY TO WIN AND JUST FOCUS ON DEFENSE INSTEAD, WE CAN BUY YOU ENOUGH TIME TO GET SHIRAE AND THE OTHERS OUT OF THERE.

.....YES.
MAKINA HOSHI-MURA?
CORPSE PRIN-CESS...
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

HMPH.
YOU FINISH CHANTING YOUR FART OF A PRAYER?
SWING
THEN ...
STEP
PREPARE YOURSELF.
STAY OR GO— EITHER CHOICE WILL BRING YOU CLOSER TO THE AFTERLIFE.
RIGHT.

!!
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
DIE !!
FWOOSH
WHOOSH

PLING
PLING
PLING
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
DASH
HUH !?
AND I GUESS THAT OTHER LITTLE CORPSE PRINCESS IS JUST HERE TO SIGHTSEE?
PLING
HEH.
PATHETIC!! THAT BARELY TICKLES!
WHOOSH
HEH.
ABOVE .....!!

!?
GUH.
THUNK
THESE GUYS.....
STEP
TMP
YOU THINK YOU CAN SPLIT YOUR FORCES AGAINST ME?
LOOKING DOWN ON ME...
CRACK
.....YOU BRATS.
OM ARORIKYA SVAHA.
SORRY. I SIMPLY BELIEVE IN SAVING ALL THE LIVES I CAN.
ALSO .....
FWIP
OM

BURST
TWITCH
!?
THAT ANISE PLANT IS A MODIFIED VERSION THAT GROWS BY SUCKING MOISTURE THROUGH ITS STEM.
FSSHH
FSSHH
FSSHH
I BET IT ALL ON THAT TRUMP CARD.

PLAY THIS RIGHT, AND I MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO SEAL HIM AWAY.....!
YOU DRY UP. RIGHT DOWN .....
...TO THE LAST DROP !!

FSSHH
FSSHH
FSSHH
.....
HMPH!

RIP
RIP
RIP
BAM
!!
CRACK
.....KU-KU. YOU THOUGHT ONE LITTLE TWIG COULD KILL ME?
PATHETIC.
HOW NAIVE, HUMAN.
THIS GUY IS.....
...UNIMAGINABLY STRONG.....
.....TCH.

BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
TMP
TMP
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
KU KU.
YOU CAN'T HIT ME.
NO HUMAN CAN.
WHAP
BUT .....
BROTHER HARANISHI'S GUN, IS STILL WORKING .....
TCH ...
HUMANS DON'T POSE HIM ANY THREAT AT ALL .....!
WHAT TO DO .....?
..... HE'S RIGHT.
ONLY THEN WOULD YOU EVEN HAVE A HOPE AT HITTING US WITH BULLETS.
PING
YOU NEED A CORPSE PRINCESS'S STRENGTH, TECHNIQUE, REFLEXES, KINETIC VISION .....

CRUMBLE
!
BUMP
WE'RE COR-NERED .....!
..... TCH.

NOW..... WHAT SHALL WE DO, KOUGON SECT?
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
KU KU KU ...
END OF THE LINE.

THIS GUY ...!!
GRIND
...!

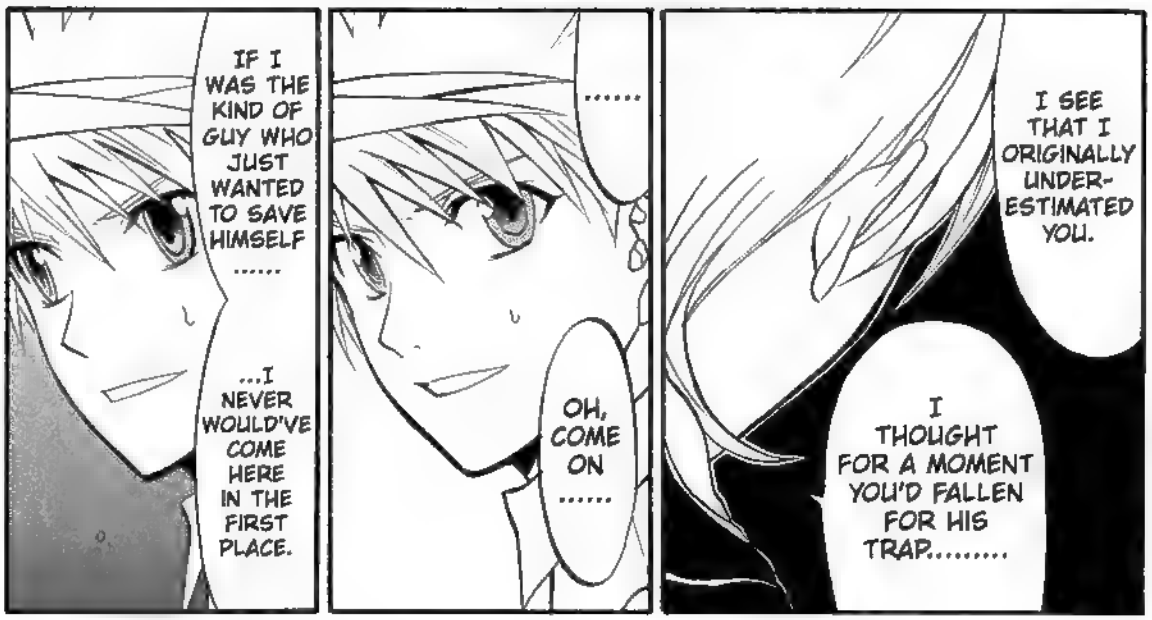
CALL ME CAPRICIOUS, BUT HOW ABOUT I LET ONE OF YOU LIVE?
MMM..... KU-KU..... YES, INDEED .....

BROTHER HARANISHI AND MYSELF ASIDE..... OURI TAGAMI IS JUST A CIVILIAN .....
DAMN..... THIS IS A TRAP!
HMMM.
WHICH WILL IT BE?
WHOEVER PLEADS FOR HIS LIFE, PERHAPS .....?
SHI-RAE-SAN.
WE CAN'T FALL FOR HIS DECEPTION SO EASILY .....
DO YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY EXPLO-SIVES OR SMOKE-SCREENS ...
...ON HAND ?
I JUST HAD A THOUGHT .....
OH, MY. A FALLING OUT?
HUMANS ARE REALLY SO DESPICA-BLE.
BZZZ
BZZZ
!
WELL, THAT IS WHY I PROPOSED SUCH A THING.

BRACE

I DON'T LIKE THAT LOOK.....
WHAT.....? THOSE EYES...
HAVE YOU DECIDED ?

OURI KAGAMI.
I'VE CHANGED MY OPINION.


IF I WAS THE KIND OF GUY WHO JUST WANTED TO SAVE HIMSELF .....
...I NEVER WOULD'VE COME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
.....
OH, COME ON .....
I SEE THAT I ORIGINALLY UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU.
I THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT YOU'D FALLEN FOR HIS TRAP.....

!
PLUCK
...OF COURSE.
SMASH
CRASH
CRASH
!!
PSSHH
BOOM
RIP
BURST
ISN'T THIS ALL A BIT FUTILE ?
ARE THEY HOPING TO SNEAK PAST ME?
A SMOKESCREEN .....?

!!
BABOOM
WHAT ARE THEY THINKING.....?
DOING THAT IN THIS CRAMPED SPACE IS TANTAMOUNT TO SUICIDE.....
!
.....BUT...
FWOOM
FLAMES..... DID THEY IGNITE THAT GAS PIPE IN ORDER TO KEEP MY INSECTS AT BAY?
STEP
FWOOM
.....A HOLE?

SIZZLE
.....
HOW-
EVER
...
NOT
A BAD
PLAN
AT
ALL.
KU-KU...
I SEE.
EVEN
WEAKLING
HUMANS
COULD
BREAK
AN OLD
CRUMBLING
WALL.
ESPECIALLY
THREE MEN.
I'M NOT
A SHIKABANE
FULL OF
INSECTS.....
I'M A
SWARM OF
SHIKABANE
INSECTS
ITSELF.
SIZZLE
...THEY'VE
MISUN-
DERSTOOD
SOME-
THING
CRUCIAL.
FLIK
...
POSE NO
THREAT
TO ME.
STEP
STEP
FLAMES
OF THIS
CALIBER
...
CLATTER
.....
NOW
HERE'S A
FAMILIAR
FACE.
GRIN
OHH
.....

.....
SEVEN ..... STARS .....?
THE FIRE MUST HAVE LED HER RIGHT TO ME .....
KU KU.
YOU'RE... THE HOSHI-MURA GIRL, RIGHT?

WHIP
JERK
!
SLAM
!!
GAH ..... HA.
WHAM
ACK !!
THE TRIGGER..... WON'T BUDGE .....!!
MY GUN .....!
Bzzz
Bzzz
Bzzz

IT'S BEEN A WHILE ...
... HOSHI-MURA GIRL.
WHAT A PITIABLE SOUL.
KU KU KU..... YOU'RE A SHIKA-BANE NOW.
YOU CAME TO OUR SIDE.
WON'T MOVE..... HOW I WANT IT TO.....!
MY BODY..... IT'S ALL STIFF.....
GUH .....
KU KU KU.
I SUP-POSE ...
...IT WAS WORTH KILLING YOU SO BRU-TALLY.
KU KU.
DID YOU HATE US ENOUGH .....
...TO TURN? US SEVEN STARS..... KU-KU.....
.....

STRAIN
MOVE!! COME ON, BODY.....!!!
MOVE! I NEED TO.....
GOTTA KILL THEM .....
THEM .....
CLICK
I NEED TO.....
REVENGE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY .....
SLAM
!!

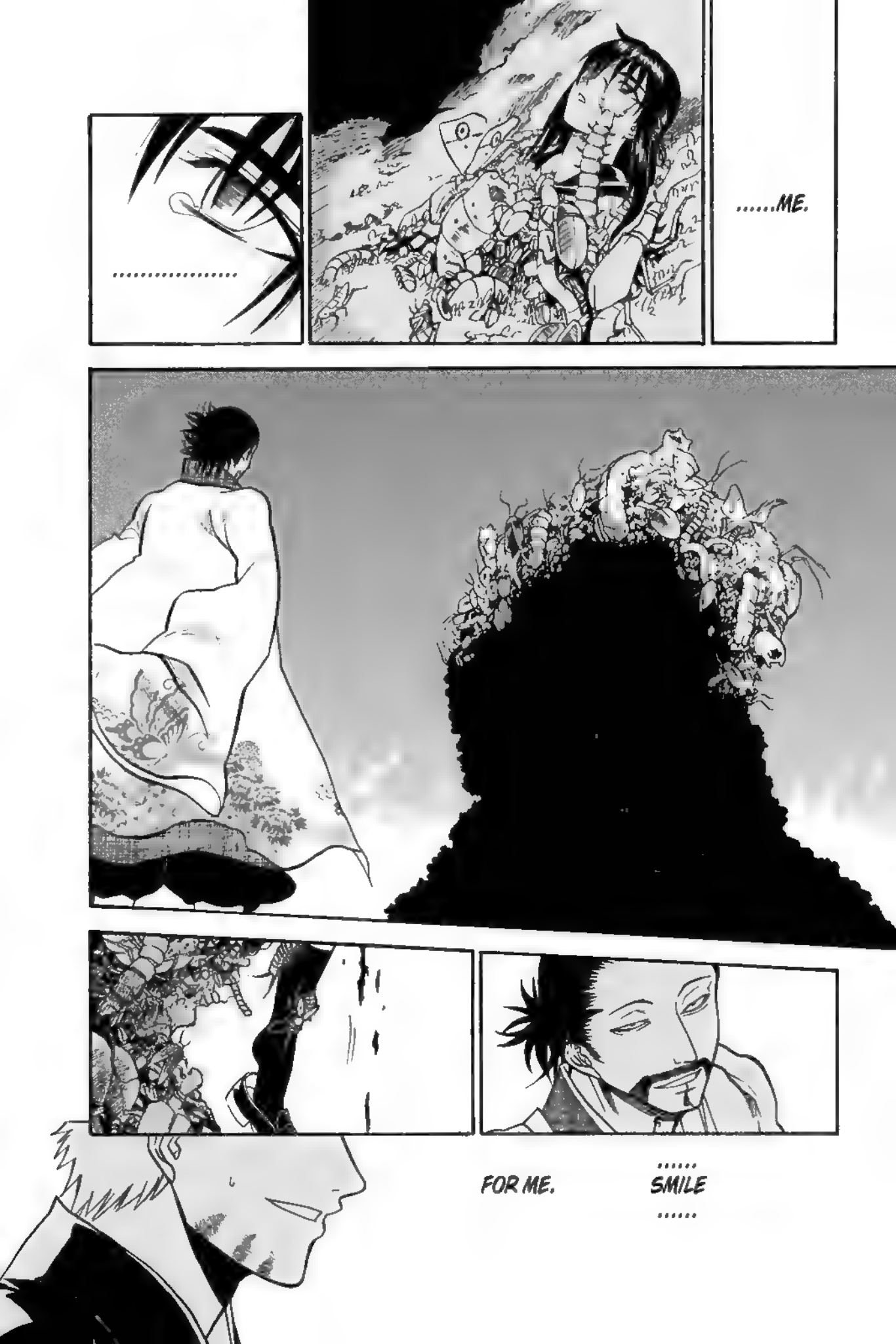
SLAM
POW
GEH.
AH.
GAH.
WHAM
ALL TIRED OUT?
KU KU ..... WHAT'S WRONG, HOSHI-MURA GIRL?
CRAWL
KIL
HACK
KOFF ...
..... KAH.
SO TRY CHEERING UP A BIT.
I'M THE ENEMY YOU'RE MEANT TO KILL. THE VERY REASON YOU BECAME A SHIKABANE, NO?

HACK.
KOFF .....
THAT'S RIGHT .....
MY REASON FOR FIGHTING .....
WHY I BECAME A CORPSE PRINCESS .....
IT WAS .....
...TO KILL THEM... THE SEVEN STARS .....
...AND TO SAVE MY OWN SOUL .....
..... BUT...
BUT ...!!
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
!

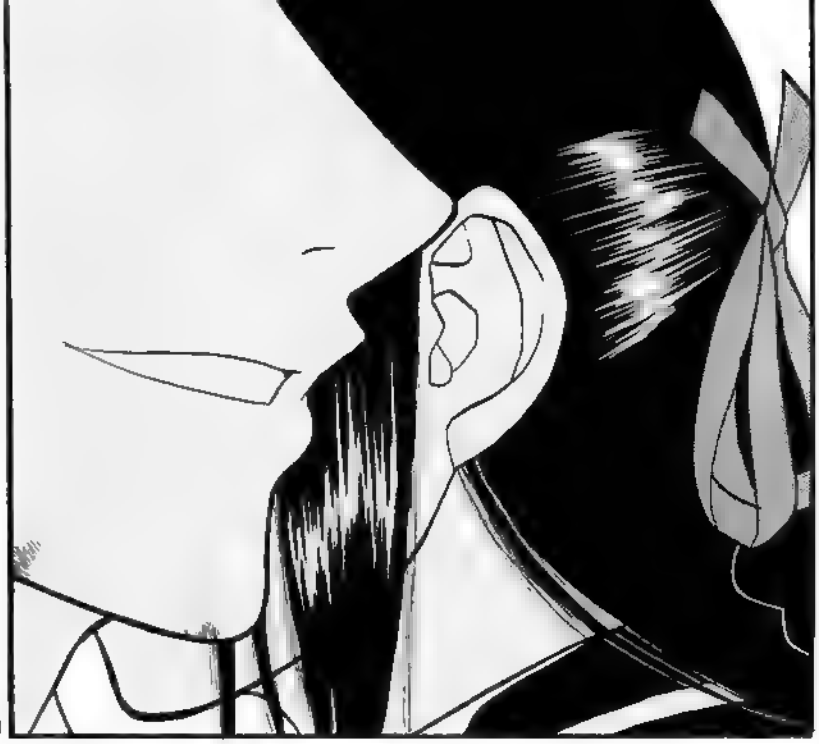
I WAS SO WRONG ABOUT YOU.
.....
MY, MY.
I CAN'T KEEP FIGHTING ON REGRETS ALONE
.....
I...
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
PAAA
NOT ENOUGH
.....
MY LIN-GERING RE-GRETS.

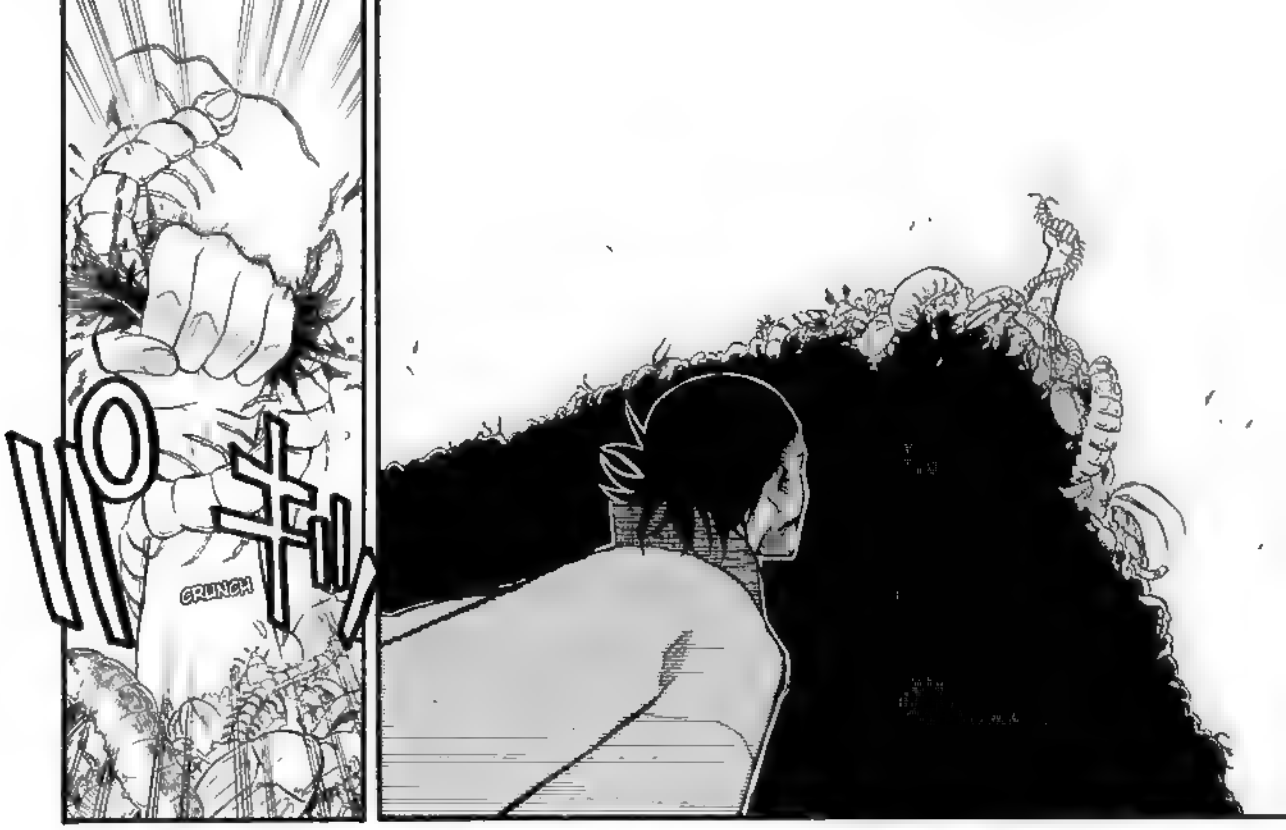
GAAH.
SLAM
SO UN-SEEMLY.
TO BREAK DOWN CRYING, LIKE A HUMAN ...

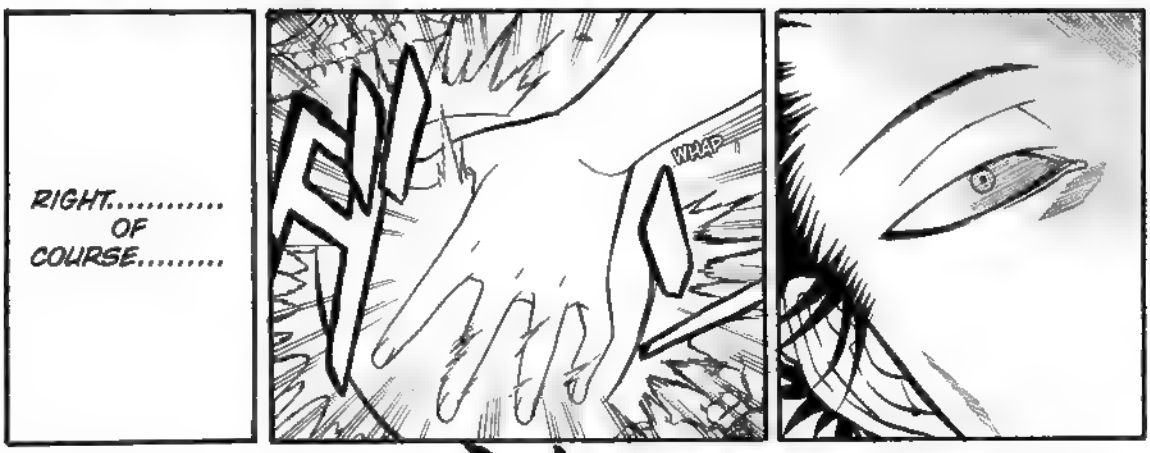
SLAM
CRACK


.....
.....ME.
FOR ME.
.....
SMILE
.....

IN THE END, SMILE FOR ME.




GRUNCH


RIGHT.....
OF
COURSE.....
WRAP

IF I ROLL
OVER AND DIE
HERE.....
THEN KEISEI'S WHOLE
BATTLE WAS FOR
NOTHING.....
CRAWL
GRIND

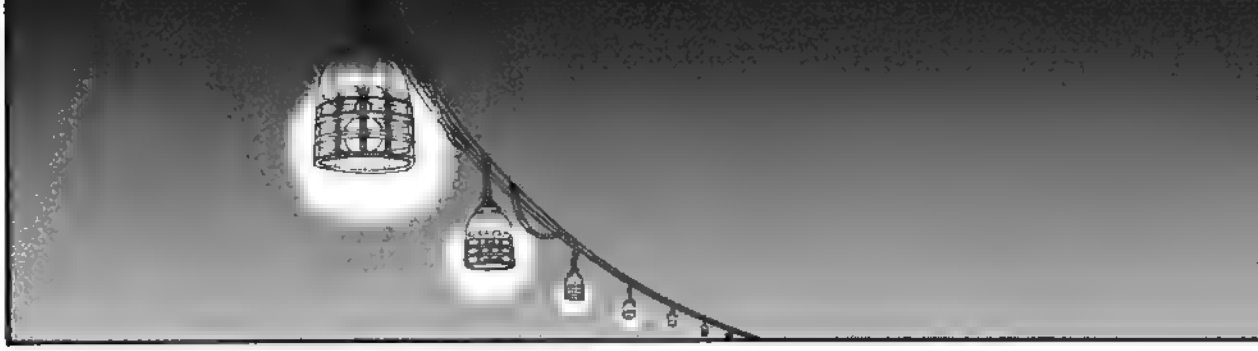
SO..... I HAVE TO KEEP MOVING.....
WIPE
STOMP
ARE YOUR EYES FINALLY OPEN, HOSHIMURA GIRL?
OHH .....
INTER-ESTING.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE.
.....
YES.
THANKS TO YOU.
I FOUND MYSELF AGAIN, AND IT WAS ALL YOUR DOING .....
PLUCK
I REMEM-BERED .....

...A CORPSE PRIN-CESS.
...THAT I'M...
STEP
!
TMP

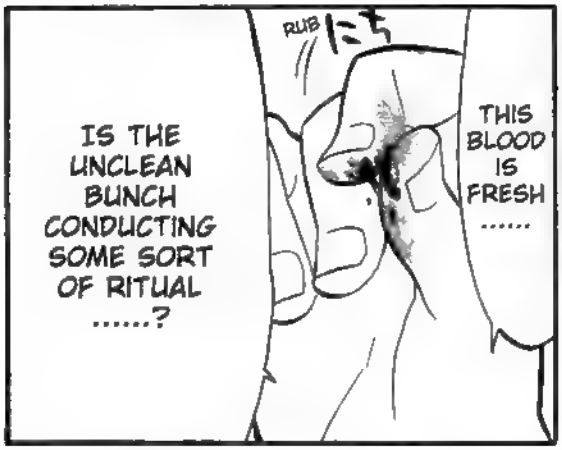
HEH.
FWIP
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BAM
GRAZE
HA HA HA.
INTER-ESTING !!
BANG
BANG
BANG

HOSHI-MURA GIRL!!
LUNGE
HOW INTER-ESTING!
FWOOM
YOU'RE SEEING MORE CLEARLY THAN BEFORE!
I LIKE THE FIRE IN YOUR EYES!
BULGE
SKID SKID SKID
!
SLAM
KAACHAK
WE FEED ON OUR REGRETS AND CONVICTIONS TO SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER. YOUR EYES ARE THOSE OF A TRUE SHIKABANE!!
HA-HA. YOU STOPPED IT! THAT'S SHIKABANE POWER FOR YOU!!
LEAP

LUNGE
YOU'RE WRONG.
RIP
I'M...
RIP
RIP
SLICE
WE'RE NOT THE SAME!!
PIERCE
NO.
I WIELD THIS GUN FOR MY OWN REASON. ONE I DECIDED ON.
...MORE THAN JUST REGRETS.
I'M A CORPSE PRIN-CESS !!!

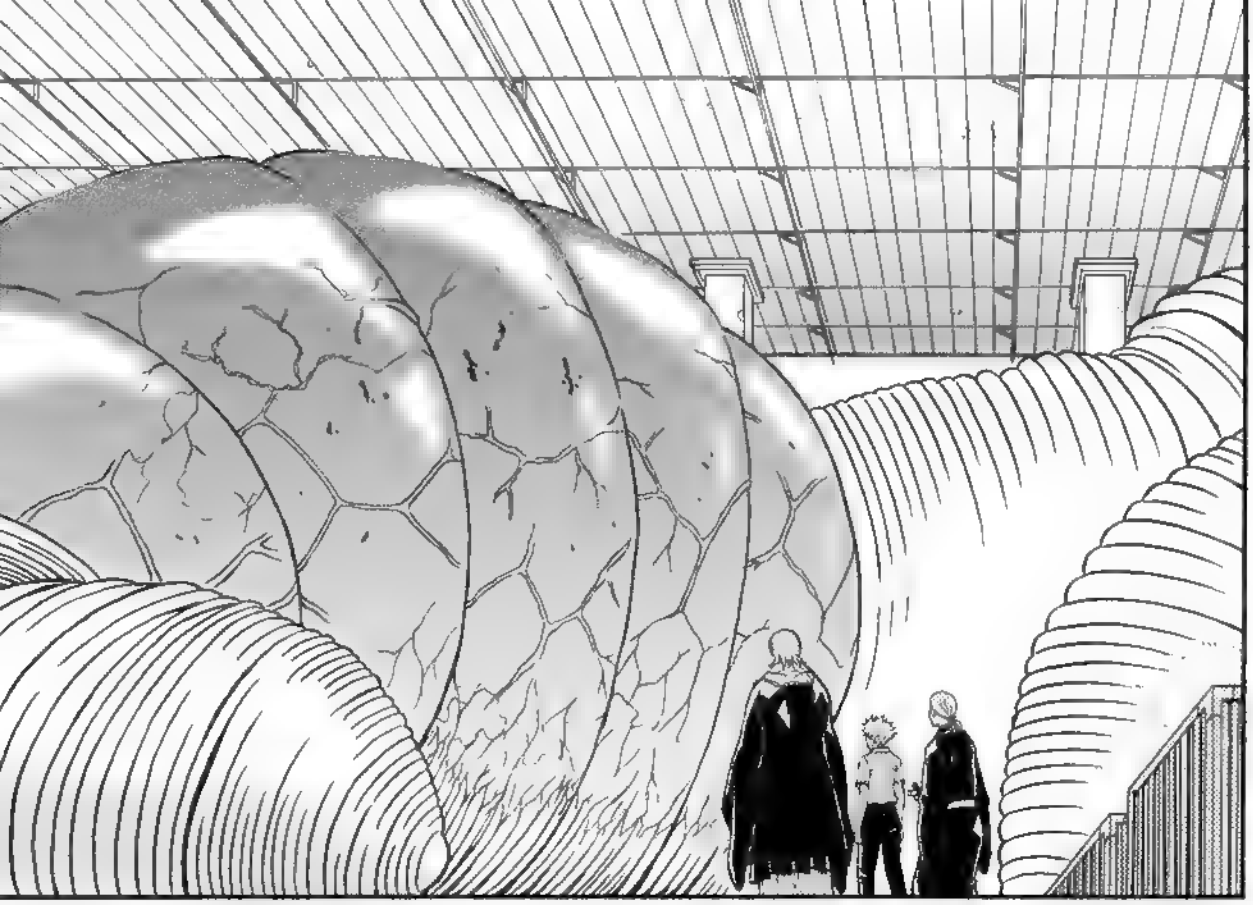


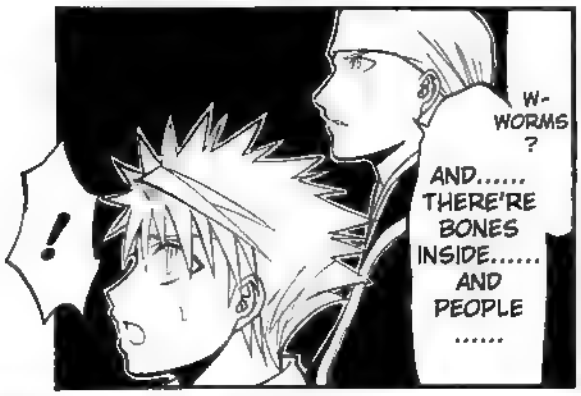
THIS IS...

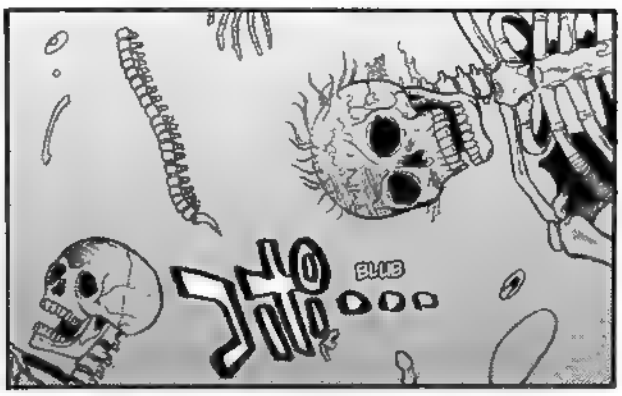

RUB
IS THE UNCLEAN BUNCH CONDUCTING SOME SORT OF RITUAL .....?
THIS BLOOD IS FRESH .....

.....
WIPE
...A TREAT-MENT FACILITY ...?

!

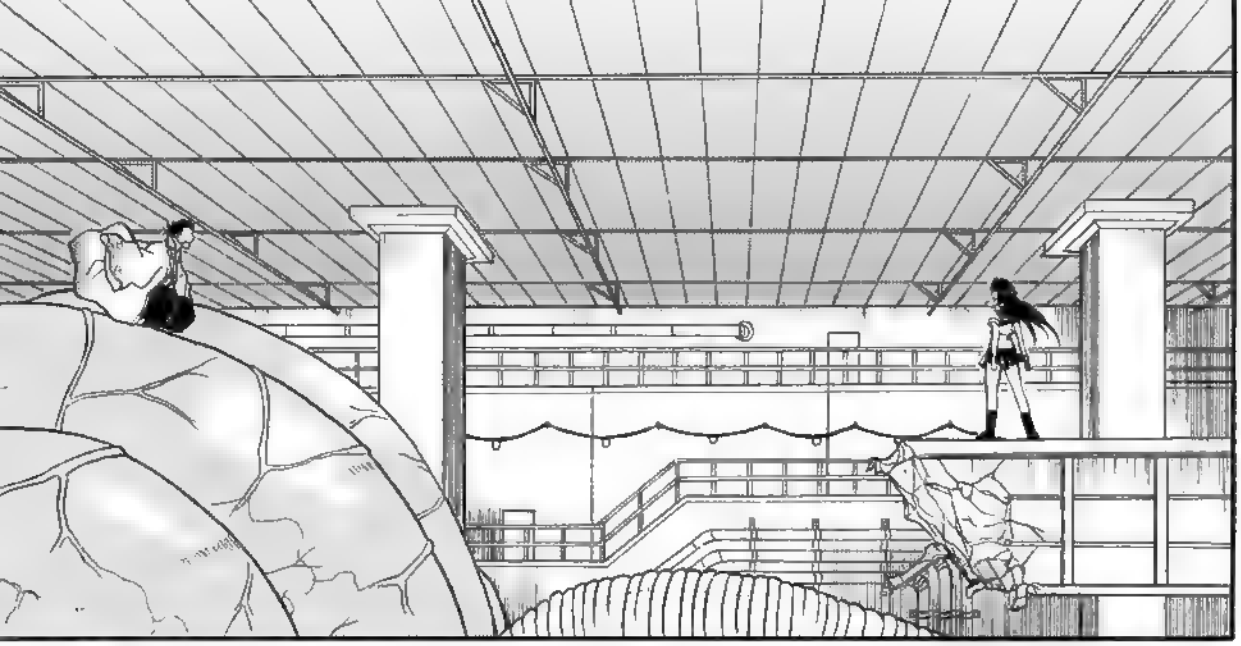



W-WORMS?
AND..... THERE'RE BONES INSIDE..... AND PEOPLE .....
!

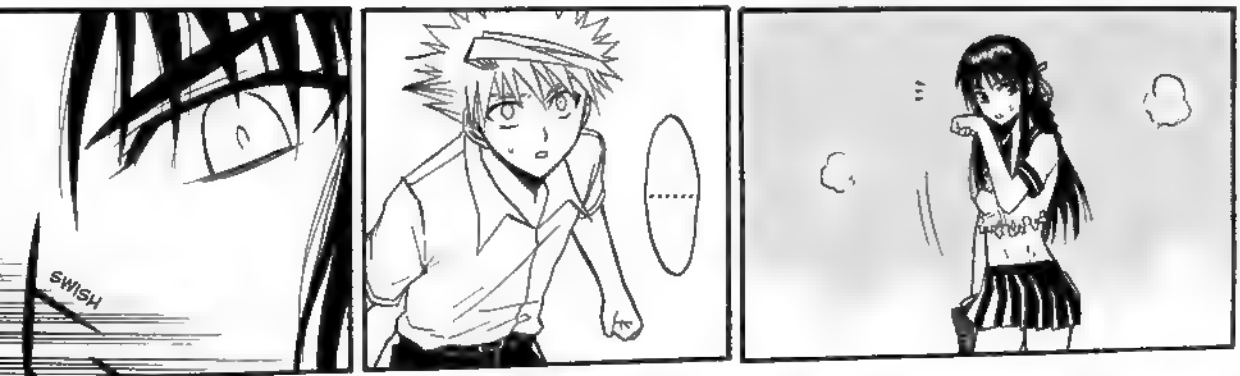

BLUB

INU-HIKO!
KA-SUGA-SAN!!
WAVE

SMASH
HEH HEH.
TMP
SKID



HOSHI... MURA-SAN?
AND MAKINA HOSHI-MURA?
THE..... SEVEN STARS MEMBER.


SWISH
.....

SLAM

BUH.
THANK GOOD-NESS!! HOSHI—
WHACK
SKID
SKID
SKID
SKID
HOSHI-MURA-SAN!
SKID
?
?
HUH?
WHAT?
ゴ——>
WHACK
ゴ————ン (エコー)
WHACK (ECHO)
HUH?
OH.
.....
YOU TOTAL MORON.
COMING TO A PLACE LIKE THIS.
SH-SHE'S A SLAPPING MACHINE.
SLAP
SLAP
OUCH !!
BUH.
SLAP
EEK.
SLAP
AH.
SLAP
SLAP
OH.
ACK.
OOF.
GRAB
SLAP
SLAP
SLAP

DO YOU KNOW ...
...WHY KEISEI BET HIS LIFE ON YOU?
WELL, DO YOU?
Y-YEAH .....
I DO.
SORRY .....
BUT I NEEDED TO SAVE MY FRIENDS.
FRIENDS...?
NO!!
BLUB
HMPH .....
I SEE .....
JUST LIKE HIS BROTHER THEN.

TMP
I'M FINISHED, MR. HAZAMA.
WHOOP-SIE...

IT'S YOU, RO-GERE ...
I'VE EXTRACTED ALL THE FLESH WE NEED FOR THE GOD-KILLER.
YAWN
ふぁー
SO SLEEPY.
CLATTER
THANKS FOR STANDING GUARD AND LENDING ME THESE EARTHWORMS TO GATHER THE RAW MATERIALS.

THE WORM, IT'S .....
!!
DASH
TWIST
TWIST
OF COURSE ..... FUFU.
THOUGH I HAD WISHED TO PLAY A BIT LONGER .....

TMP
TMP
TMP
!
!
JOLT
IDIOT.
OHH .....
THIS BOY..... INTER-ESTING.
SHOULD I TAKE YOUR HEAD AS A SOUVENIR ?
FWIP
BOOM
BOOM
TCH !!
BOOM
BOOM
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
UHH ..... AHH ...
AHHHHH!!!

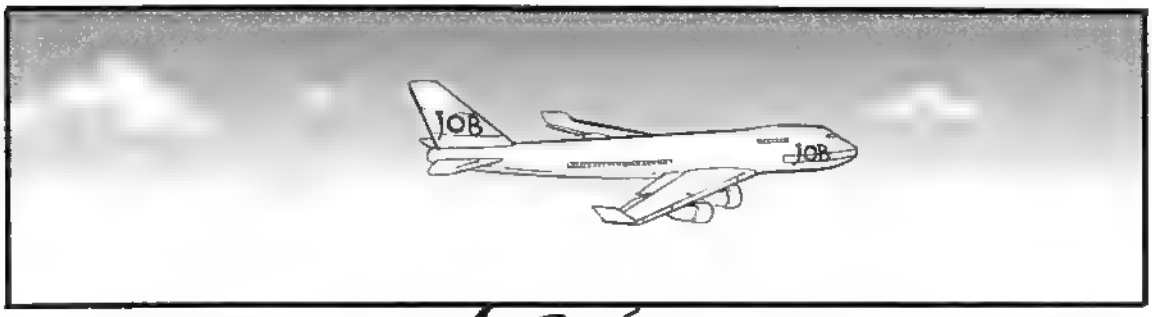
UOHHHH!!
THRUST
SNAP
UGH .....
OH.
GAH.
BLUB
OAHH.
AHHH.
GRAB
UGH.
GUH.
BURST

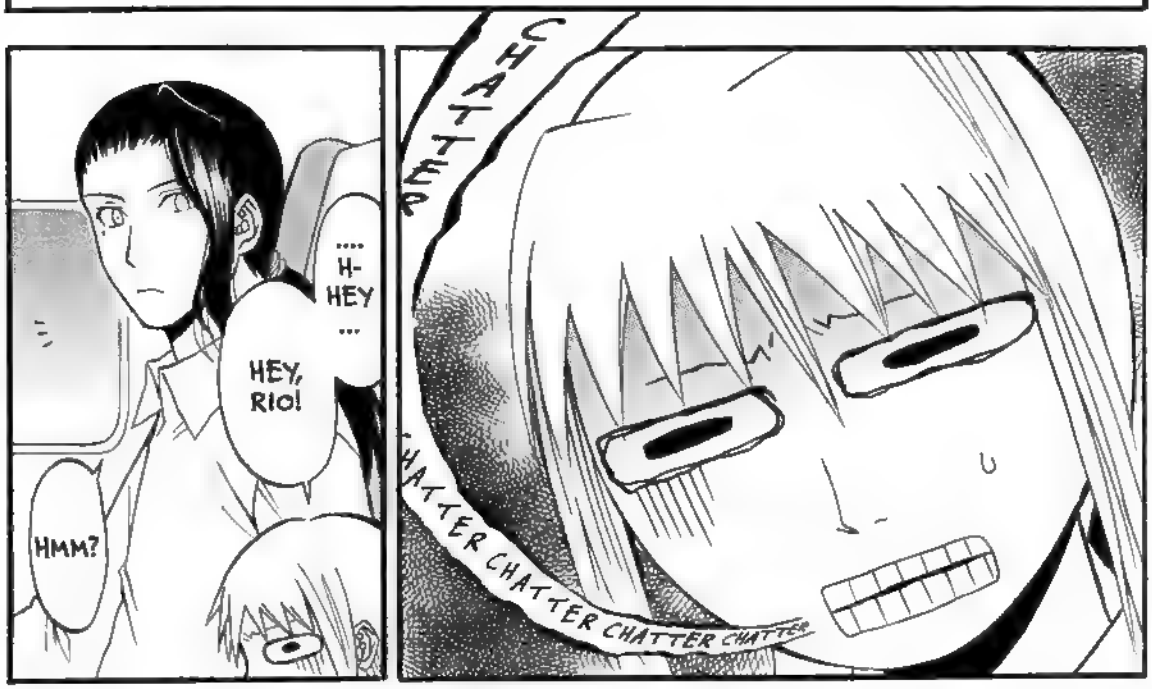
AHHHHHHH.
SPLASH
UBOAHHH!!
OHH.
RIP
SOMETIMES A FOOL WHO DOESN'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT PERFORMS BETTER THAN A WISE MAN WHO DOES.....
!
FU-FU. I SEE.

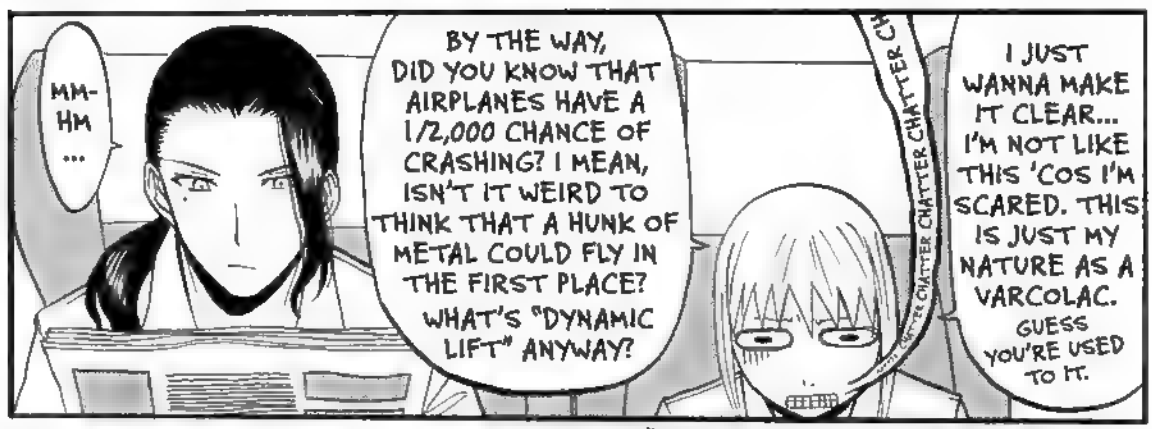
Corpse Princess 4 End

4
CORPSE PRINCESS

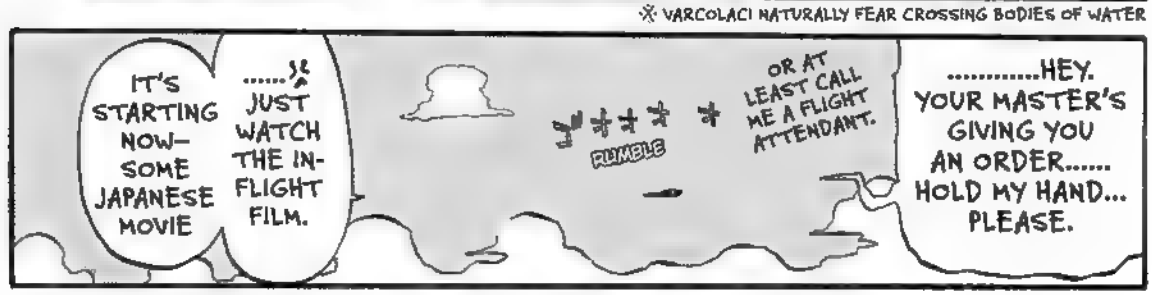
BONUS: THOSE TWO UP IN THE AIR






MM-HM ...
BY THE WAY, DID YOU KNOW THAT AIRPLANES HAVE A 1/2,000 CHANCE OF CRASHING? I MEAN, ISN'T IT WEIRD TO THINK THAT A HUNK OF METAL COULD FLY IN THE FIRST PLACE? WHAT'S "DYNAMIC LIFT" ANYWAY?
I JUST WANNA MAKE IT CLEAR... I'M NOT LIKE THIS 'COS I'M SCARED. THIS IS JUST MY NATURE AS A VARCOLAC. GUESS YOU'RE USED TO IT.

※ VARCOLACI NATURALLY FEAR CROSSING BODIES OF WATER


IT'S STARTING NOW— SOME JAPANESE MOVIE
.....JUST WATCH THE IN-FLIGHT FILM.
RUMBLE
OR AT LEAST CALL ME A FLIGHT ATTENDANT.
.....HEY. YOUR MASTER'S GIVING YOU AN ORDER..... HOLD MY HAND... PLEASE.

AND THAT'S HOW DEV BECAME A FAN OF JAPANESE CINEMA.

"I REMEMBERED THAT I'M A CORPSE PRINCESS," SAYS MAKINA HOSHIMURA. SHE'S READY TO STAND UP AGAIN AND FIGHT, EVEN IF IT'S AGAINST HER INESCAPABLE DESTINY. EVEN IF IT MEANS FORGETTING THE NAME OF THE ONE SHE LOVED MOST. BUT THE DARKNESS SWIRLS, AND THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S SUPREME KING VIOLATES HEAVENLY LAWS AND BREAKS BOUNDARIES AS HE WRITHES INTO EXISTENCE ONCE AGAIN.

SHIKABANE KILLS NEEDED FOR CORPSE PRINCESS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN: 95

5

volume COMING SOON

CORPSE PRINCESS

WHAT IF? SERIES 4
WHAT IF CORPSE PRINCESS WAS A SUPER BASEBALL SERIES...?
HERE WE GO. MY THIRD MAGIC CHANGEUP !!
SHIFT
SURE-FIRE SPIKE BALL!!
※ EXTREMELY DANGEROUS
FU-FU-FU... IF I GET A HOMERUN WITH THIS BAT FULL O' NAILS, THAT'S THREE POINTS.
KOUGON SECT
FWOOM

AKAHITO YOSHIICHI

AKASHA SHISHIDOU
HEIGHT: 173 CM WEIGHT: 60 KG
BIRTHDAY: NOVEMBER 14TH AGE: 26
BLOOD TYPE: A
FAVORITE THINGS: TOFU (DRIED CURDS, SOY MILK), READING, QUIET PLACES, FORTUNE-TELLING
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS: THE LATEST ELECTRONIC DEVICES (BECAUSE HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THEM)
SPECIAL ABILITIES: SPEED-READING, MEMORIZATION
ROGERE C. GUSTAV
HEIGHT: 180 CM WEIGHT: 76 KG
BIRTHDAY: OCTOBER 31ST AGE: 27
BLOOD TYPE: AB
FAVORITE THINGS: COFFEE (BLACK), LAMB DISHES, STRONG-WILLED WOMEN, CHEESE
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS: NATTO
SPECIAL ABILITIES: DETAILED WORK WITH HIS HANDS, PULLING ALL-NIGHTERS
BITTER GREEN TEA
BLACK coffee

TRANSLATION NOTES

OVERALL

Japanese Buddhism has a complex ranking system for its monks called *soukan* (*sou* meaning "monk," and *kan* implying hierarchy). Monks in this story often address each other by rank.

PAGE 49

The "sounding box" included with Ouri's music box gift is just a hollow wooden frame used to amplify and improve the sound quality of the music box.

PAGE 54

Though Keisei's body isn't shown here, Ouri and Hina are at the crematorium. The smoke on the previous page is from the facility's oven.

PAGE 66

"Bone-picking" refers to the act of using chopsticks to transfer the deceased bones (post-cremation) from the ash pile to an urn. This is generally done by family members, or, in Keisei's case, his loved ones.

PAGE 191

Natto: Fermented soy beans

CORPSE PRINCESS 4

Yoshiichi Akahito

Translation: Caleb D. Cook
Lettering: Bianca Pistillo

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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Yen Press
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10104

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First Yen Press ebook Edition: April 2016

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-39312-6

App ISBN: 978-0-316-39313-3